The Unesco Courier

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1980 - 7.00 FRENCH FRANCS

Victory in Nubia

The greatest archaeological rescue operation of all time

Photo © National Museum, Warsaw

TREASURES OF WORLD ART

150

The Sudan

Fiery steed from Faras

The spirited movements of a rearing horse are perfectly captured in this detail of a twelfth-century mural from the Cathedral of Faras in Sudanese Nubia, near the Egyptian border. The Cathedral, an important religious centre in Christian Nubia, was excavated by the Polish Archaeological Mission to Nubia, and was one of the first archaeological sites in Sudanese Nubia to be submerged by the waters of the artificial lake created by the Aswan High Dam. The two prong-like lines beneath the right foreleg suggest that this is a picture of an ornament which could be pinned or fastened to a garment. Egypt and the Sudan donated to each State which took part in the Nubian campaign a share of the treasures discovered by its archaeological mission. The above mural is now displayed in Poland's National Museum, Warsaw.

The Unesco Courier

A window open on the world

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page

4 **'A SINGLE, UNIVERSAL HERITAGE'**
by Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow

VICTORY IN NUBIA
Unesco and the world community in the greatest archaeological rescue campaign of all time

5 **I. EGYPT**
by Shehata Adam Mohamed

16 **II. THE SUDAN**
by Negm-el-Din Mohammed Sherif

8 **MILESTONES IN THE CAMPAIGN**

14 **TEMPLES RESCUED FROM THE NILE**
Map

20 **NUBIA UNEARTHED**
From prehistory to Pharaonic times
by Torgny Säve-Söderbergh

25 **NUBIA'S CORRIDOR OF TIME**
From the Kingdom of Kush to the triumph of Islam
by William Y. Adams

30 **SITES EXCAVATED**
Map

32 **A CHRONOLOGY OF ANCIENT NUBIA**

32 **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPEDITIONS**

35 **FOUR PAGES IN FULL COLOUR**

46 **THE HOLY ISLE OF PHILAE**
by Iorwerth E.S. Edwards

48 **THE MYSTERIES OF ISIS AND OSIRIS**
by François Daumas

53 **THE MAGIC OF ABU SIMBEL**
by Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt

58 **SERMONS IN STONES**
The musings of a modern Egyptian poet before the temples of Abu Simbel
by Tewfik El Hakim

62 **THE FLOODED FORTRESSES OF NUBIA**
by Jean Vercoutter

66 **THE BLESSED LAND**
by Robert A. Fernea

70 **FURTHER READING ON NUBIA**

2 **TREASURES OF WORLD ART**
THE SUDAN: Fiery steed from Faras

This special issue was prepared with the invaluable collaboration of Abdel Moneim El Sawi, editor of the Arabic edition of the Unesco Courier *who, first as Under-Secretary of State and later as Minister of Culture of the Egyptian Government, was one of the prime movers and organizers of the International Campaign. We are also grateful for the collaboration of the well-known French archaeologist Louis Christophe who, as Unesco's principal archaeological adviser, played a key role in the campaign and who gave freely of his vast knowledge of Nubia and his practical experience during the preparation of this issue.*

Cover

On March 10, 1980, Unesco's twenty-year International Campaign to save the treasures of Nubia from the waters of the Nile as they rose behind the Aswan High Dam comes officially to an end. To mark this occasion the *Unesco Courier* is breaking with custom in publishing, for February and March of this year, a double issue devoted entirely to this unprecedented example of international co-operation. Our usual double issue, for August/September, will be replaced by two single issues. Cover photo shows a column from the temple of Nectanebo, part of the Philae complex of temples, as it stands today on its new site on the island of Agilkia. The head carved on the column is that of the ancient Egyptian goddess Hathor. During the campaign workmen, engineers, architects and archaeologists combined their efforts to move to safety twenty-two temples in what must rank as one of the greatest technical exploits of this century.

Photo Mohammed Fathy Ibrahim Dessouky © Documentation Centre for Ancient Egypt, Cairo

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'A single, universal heritage'

THE story of mankind begins to unfold from the moment that men's memories, their hopes and doubts, take shape in stone or find expression in a mask or a musical rhythm. In defiance of death the message is passed down from generation to generation, spinning the long thread of historical continuity that enables nations to perpetuate their collective identity in the face of change.

The works that constitute the spiritual or material, the literary or artistic fabric of this continuity have thus, from earliest times, come to acquire inestimable value in the eyes of the peoples that created them. But only recently have they begun to be respected, studied and appreciated by the rest of the world.

Indeed, our generation is the first in history to perceive the totality of these works as an indivisible whole, each of them being considered as an integral part of a single universal heritage.

The International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia is a striking example of this new awareness. It has been marked throughout by a spirit of the widest possible co-operation and thus has attained all the objectives originally assigned to it. It will be numbered among the few major attempts made in our lifetime by the nations to assume their common responsibility towards the past so as to move forward in a spirit of brotherhood towards the future.

Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow
Director-General of Unesco

Photo Mohamed Fathy Ibrahim Dessouky, Documentation Centre for Ancient Egypt, Cairo

Unesco and the world community in the greatest archaeological rescue campaign of all time (1960-1980)

Victory in Nubia: Egypt

by Shehata Adam Mohamed

IN THE LAP OF THE GODS. Work in progress during the reconstruction of the great temple of Abu Simbel. Completed in September 1968, the mammoth, five-year task of dismantling, transporting and re-erecting Ramses the Great's most grandiose construction was a triumph of technical and engineering skill (see pages 10 and 11 and central colour pages).

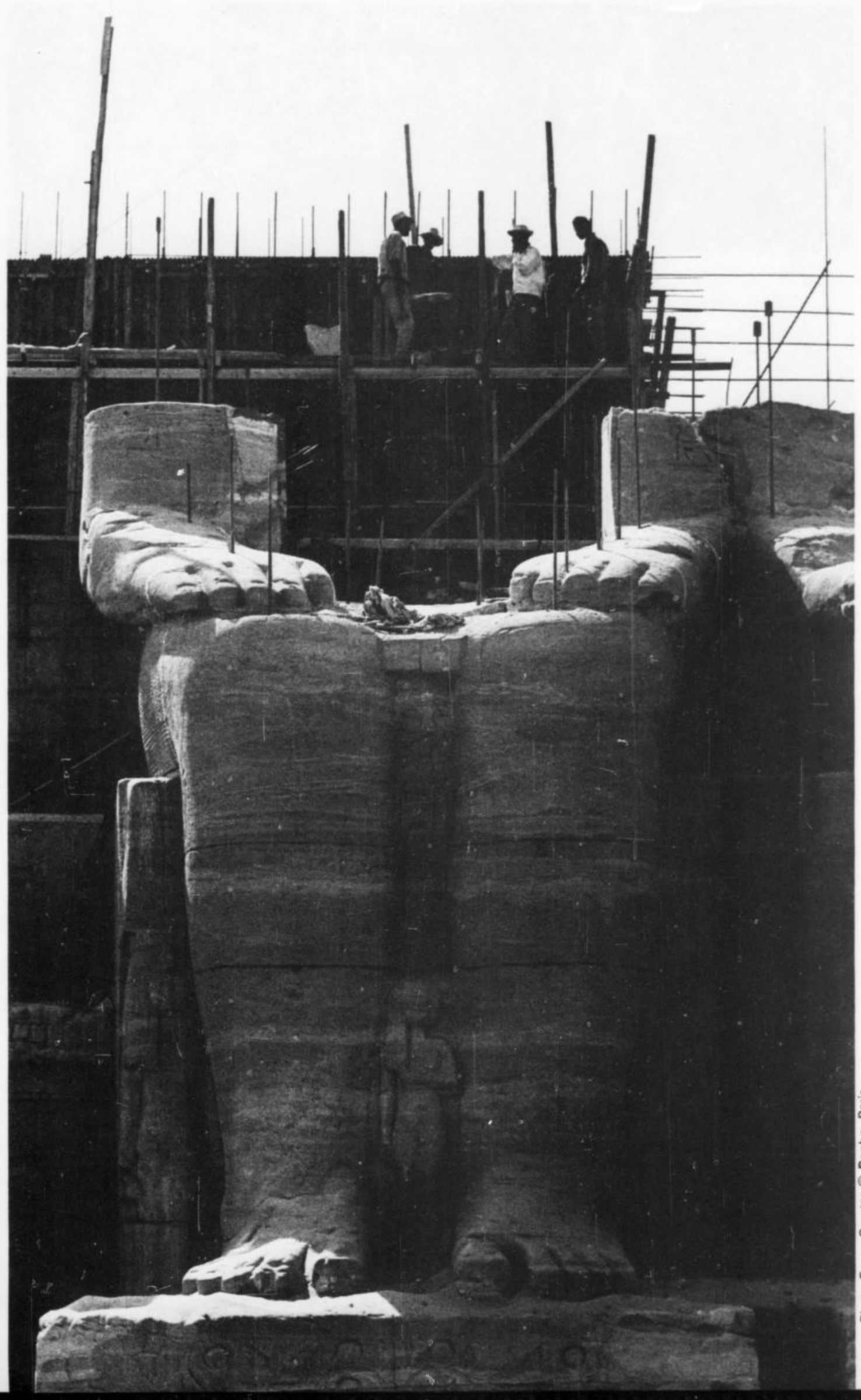


Photo Georg Gerster © Rapho, Paris

THE boat weighed anchor and set off on a voyage up the Nile through Nubian territory. As it glided silently over the water, the first glimmer of dawn appeared on the horizon. Hemming in the valley on either side was a desert landscape that stretched as far as the eye could see.

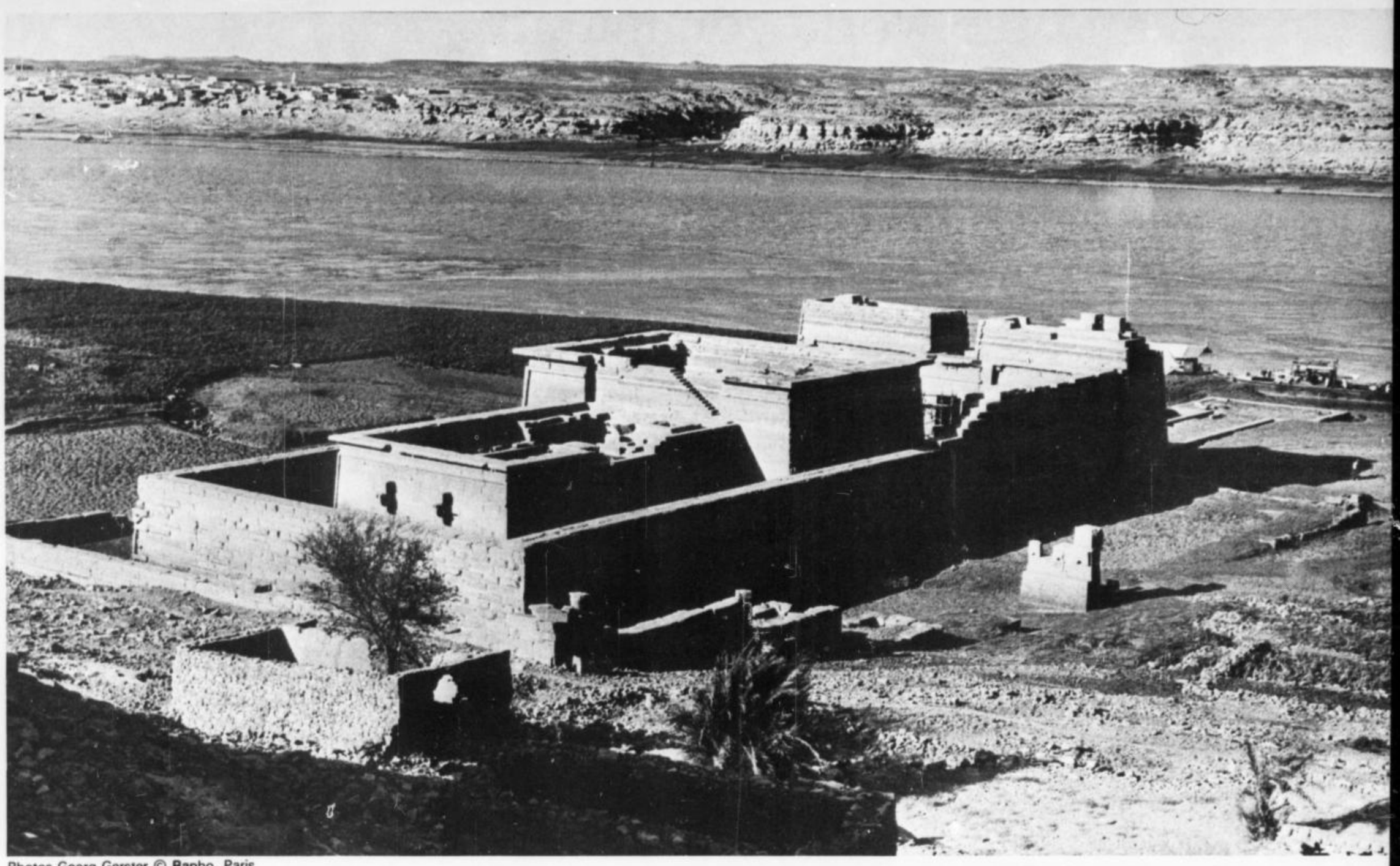
Here and there, tiers of Nubian houses stood on the slopes which rose from the left and right banks of the Nile, the river that is the life-blood of Egypt and the Sudan. These houses, remarkable for the decorations covering their façades and walls, and for the domes built over their inner courtyards, were inhabited by the Nubians, whose loose-fitting robes were as snow-white as their eyes were piercingly dark.

Before long, as the boat continued quietly to ply the blue waters, the sun rose on the eastern horizon and began to climb slowly into the heavens, revealing, as it did so, a succession of temples built on either side of the river—temples where Egyptian and Nubian deities were once worshipped. There were tombs, too, cemeteries, and the remains of churches and mosques, some of them already visible, others still buried in the ground. And the rock faces bore inscriptions left behind by the various civilizations that had passed through or lived in this region in the course of history.

The twentieth century, however, ushered in important changes for the peoples who had for so long been settled on the banks of the Nile. The building of the Aswan Dam (1898-1902) and its heightening on two occasions (1907-1912 and 1929-1934) meant that the Nubians had to move their towns and villages to higher ground. Archaeological excavations were therefore carried out in areas due to be submerged by the Nile, which would rise to a height of 121 metres above sea level. Certain temples were consolidated so they could withstand the fluctuation of the waters which would cover them for most of the year.

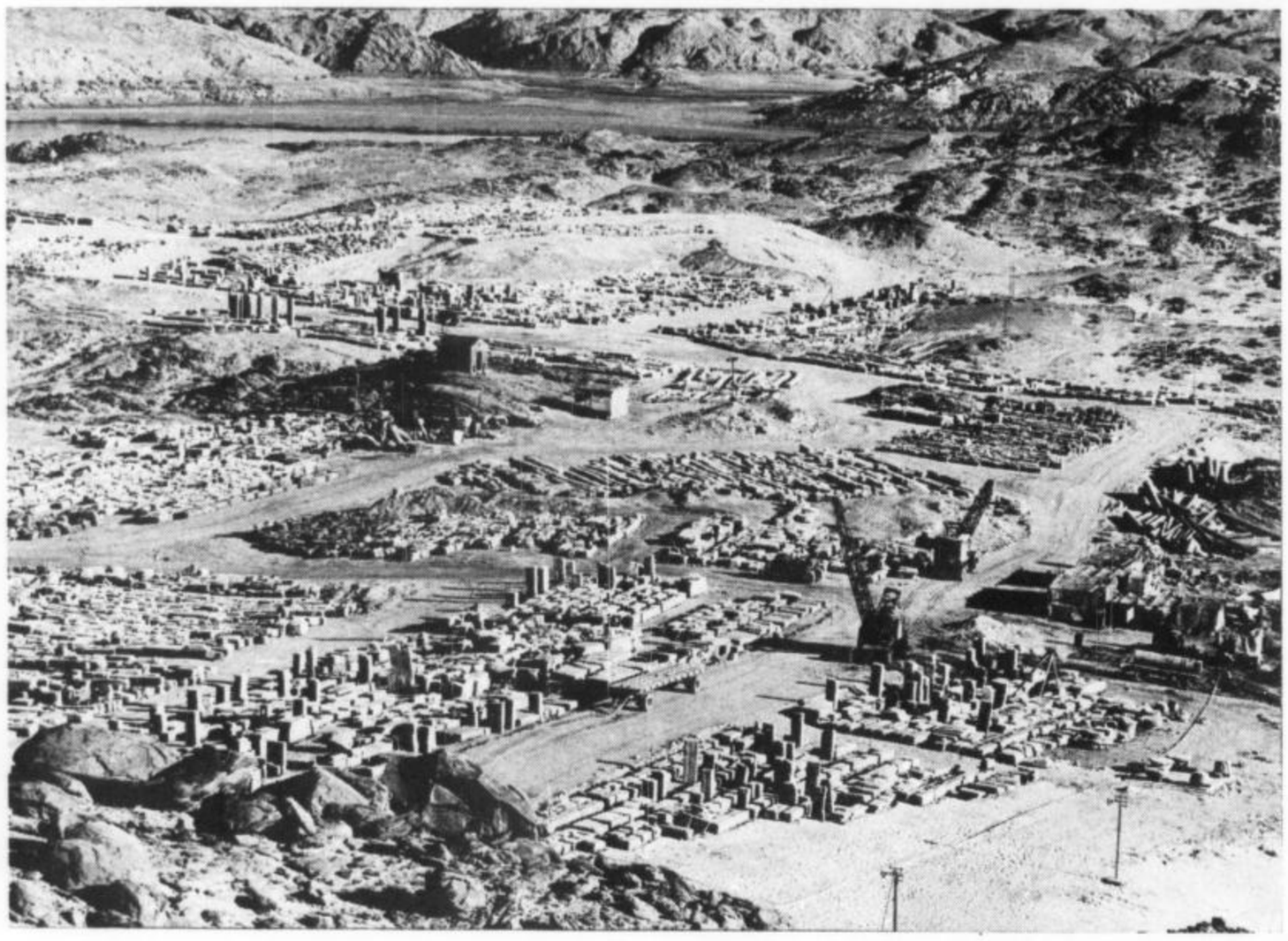
Under the Aswan High Dam project, however, which was designed to generate hydroelectric power and increase cropland, the waters of the Nile would be raised by a further sixty-two metres above sea level, to ▸

SHEHATA ADAM MOHAMED, *of Egypt, is president of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization. He was formerly director of the Monuments of Nubia Service of the Egyptian Ministry of Culture and later of the Documentation Centre for Ancient Egypt in Cairo. He is the author of many articles and studies on Egyptian archaeology, including an important thesis entitled* Travellers of Ancient Egypt.



Photos Georg Gerster © Rapho, Paris

A 1,600-piece jigsaw puzzle in stone



Re-built by the Emperor Augustus from the remains of a temple erected in late Ptolemaic times, the temple of Kalabsha, 120 metres long and 70 metres wide, is as big as a medieval Gothic cathedral. It was dedicated to the god Mandulis, the Nubian equivalent of Horus son of Isis. Photo above shows temple on its original site on the west bank of the Nile some 50 kilometres south of Aswan. When the temple was threatened with total, permanent submersion following the construction of the Aswan High Dam, the Federal Republic of Germany undertook to dismantle and re-erect it on a new site. The task of dismantling involved lifting some one thousand six hundred sandstone blocks, some weighing as much as twenty tons, loading them on barges and transporting them to a storage area (left) near the new site being prepared on a hill on the west bank of the Nile about one kilometre south of the High Dam. Reconstruction of the temple began in October 1962 and the last piece in this gigantic jigsaw puzzle was slotted into place in October 1963. Meanwhile, in January and February 1962, the Egyptian Antiquities Service had re-erected on the same site the ruins of a small Roman monument, the Kiosk of Kertassi. Top right, the temple of Kalabsha, with the Kiosk to the left, as it stands today on its imposing new site.

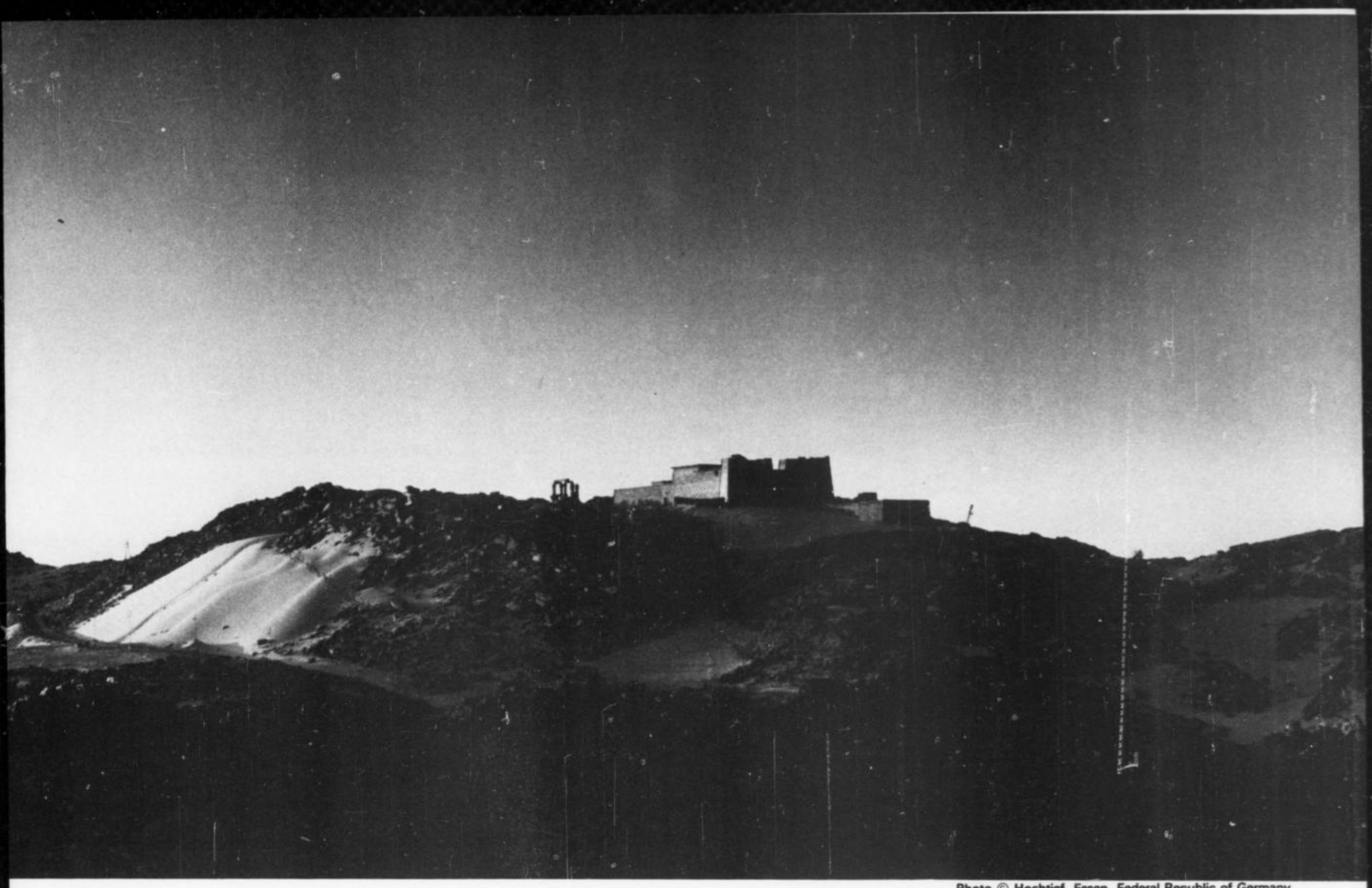


Photo © Hochtief, Essen, Federal Republic of Germany

the south of Aswan as far upstream as the Dal Cataract in the Sudan, creating a vast lake that would engulf for ever all trace of life from ancient or modern times.

This dramatic prospect prompted the Egyptian and Sudanese Governments in 1959 to ask Unesco to launch an international appeal aimed at saving the Nubian historical heritage as the embodiment of a civilization which had played a leading role in the history of that part of the Nile valley.

Nubia was not unknown to the international community at large. It had not only featured in the works of classical Greek and Roman authors, but had been described by European explorers like Louis Norden, Johann Ludwig Burckhardt and Amelia Edwards. Nubia had also been studied and explored by various scientific and archaeological expeditions during the nineteenth century, including those of François Champollion, who succeeded in deciphering hieroglyphic writing, and of Karl Richard Lepsius, who published a twelve-volume work devoted to Egyptian and Nubian antiquities. In the twentieth century, too, important excavations and surveys carried out by successive archaeological missions in both Egyptian and Sudanese Nubia have thrown light on the various Nubian civilizations that once flourished between Aswan in the north and Kerma in the south.

This time, however, the problem was of a more complex nature. Unesco therefore organized a conference of experts whose task it was to draw up an international plan of action aimed at saving the Nubian heritage in its entirety. The experts met in Egypt in October 1959. They visited Nubia and examined its monuments between Aswan and Semna. In their recommendations, they pointed to the need to carry out excavations on each and every archaeological site, to survey all Nubia's ancient structures, and to move the threatened temples and rebuild them on ground higher than the High Dam lake.

To save the two temples of Abu Simbel, it was proposed either to build protective dams or to raise the temples on hydraulic jacks. The conference eventually recommended that an earth and rock fill dam should be built round the two temples.

Three projects to preserve the temples of Philae were also examined. The first of these was based on the principle of building a protective dam round the temples; the second provided for them to be dismantled and re-erected on the island of Philae after its level had been raised; and the third called for the construction of three dams linking the island of Bigeh to that of Agilkia and to the right bank of the Nile. This solution was adopted and recommended by the conference.

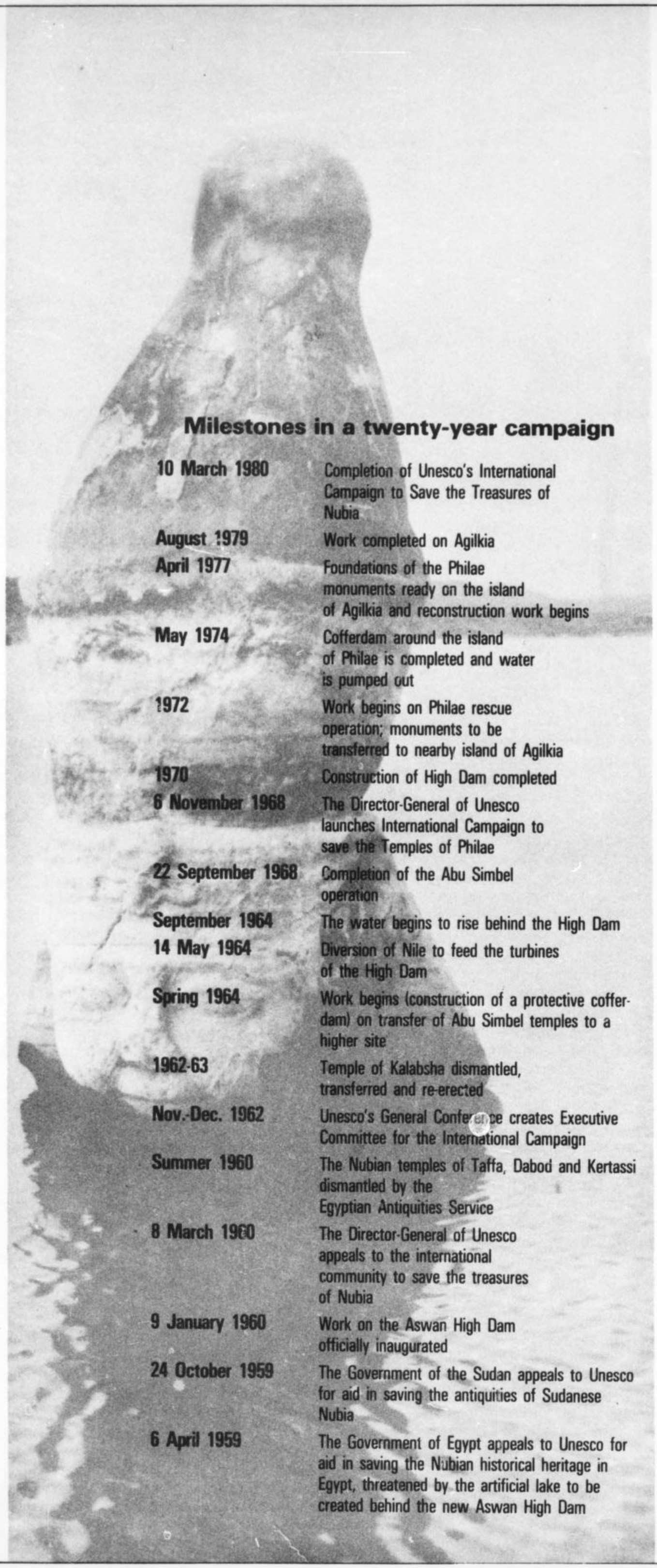
The work of the conference, which was carried out at the same time as similar work on ways of salvaging the monuments of Sudanese Nubia, resulted in an international plan of action being clearly defined in accordance with the wishes of Unesco and of its Executive Board. Launching an international appeal on 8 March 1960, the Director-General of Unesco called on the world community to supply the financial and technical assistance which could save the Nubian monuments in both Egypt and the Sudan. He stressed the fact that the treasures were part of the heritage of all mankind.

His appeal was followed up by intensive international exchanges which were closely geared to every phase of the International Campaign. The Egyptian Government showed, by its perceptive action, that it had a clear awareness of the extent of the problem involved. Ancient objects were selected from the nation's museums and sent abroad for exhibition so as to promote understanding of the value of the Egyptian heritage and of its cultural role. Moreover, the Government set up a Special Committee for the project, as well as other advisory committees, made up of experts in the fields of archaeology, technology and finance.

Egypt also founded a Service for the Safeguard of the Monuments of Nubia, which played a very effective role. Furthermore, the General Conference of Unesco in 1962 set up an Executive Committee, which was entrusted with the task of supervising work on the project. These combined efforts brought the work of the Campaign to a successful conclusion.

The international appeal met with a favourable response. First to rally to the cause, not surprisingly, were the teams of archaeologists who came, at a very early date, to carry out excavations and surveys in Egyptian and Sudanese Nubia. They discovered traces of the ancient civilizations that had succeeded each other in Nubia, from the dawn of history up to the Christian and Islamic eras. Their work helped to reveal the ruins of cities, forts, cemeteries and dykes, paved the way for anthropological studies and for the investigations of human and animal origins, and, lastly, threw light on relations and contacts between the north and the south.

Similarly, research carried out in Egyptian Nubia focussed specifically on the Nubian people, their way of life, and their more recent communities. Other work was carried out at the same time on the documentation of Egyptian temples and tombs. From 1956 on, no effort was spared to this end by missions from the Documentation and Study Centre for the History of the Art and Civilization of Ancient Egypt, in collaboration with Unesco, which had helped to set up the Centre. The missions included experts from France, Poland and Belgium. A team from



Milestones in a twenty-year campaign

10 March 1980	Completion of Unesco's International Campaign to Save the Treasures of Nubia
August 1979	Work completed on Agilkia
April 1977	Foundations of the Philae monuments ready on the island of Agilkia and reconstruction work begins
May 1974	Cofferdam around the island of Philae is completed and water is pumped out
1972	Work begins on Philae rescue operation; monuments to be transferred to nearby island of Agilkia
1970	Construction of High Dam completed
6 November 1968	The Director-General of Unesco launches International Campaign to save the Temples of Philae
22 September 1968	Completion of the Abu Simbel operation
September 1964	The water begins to rise behind the High Dam
14 May 1964	Diversion of Nile to feed the turbines of the High Dam
Spring 1964	Work begins (construction of a protective cofferdam) on transfer of Abu Simbel temples to a higher site
1962-63	Temple of Kalabsha dismantled, transferred and re-erected
Nov.-Dec. 1962	Unesco's General Conference creates Executive Committee for the International Campaign
Summer 1960	The Nubian temples of Taffa, Dabod and Kertassi dismantled by the Egyptian Antiquities Service
8 March 1960	The Director-General of Unesco appeals to the international community to save the treasures of Nubia
9 January 1960	Work on the Aswan High Dam officially inaugurated
24 October 1959	The Government of the Sudan appeals to Unesco for aid in saving the antiquities of Sudanese Nubia
6 April 1959	The Government of Egypt appeals to Unesco for aid in saving the Nubian historical heritage in Egypt, threatened by the artificial lake to be created behind the new Aswan High Dam

Photo © François Daumas, Paris

Two of the most spectacular engineering feats of Unesco's International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia were the dismantling, removal and re-erection of the temples of Abu Simbel (see pages 10 and 11) and of Philae (see pages 46 and 47). These technical exploits rivalled in scope the achievements of the ancient Egyptians who raised Philae and carved Abu Simbel from the solid mass of a Nubian hillside over 3,000 years ago.

ABU SIMBEL

Total cost: $ 42,000,000, of which half was borne by the Arab Republic of Egypt and half provided by international contributions.
Organizers: The Ministry of Culture of the Arab Republic of Egypt assisted by Unesco.
Advisers: Executive Committee for the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia, composed of representatives of 15 Member States elected by the General Conference of Unesco.
Various groups and committees of experts—architects, archaeologists and engineers.
Consulting engineers and architects: Vattenbyggnadsbryan (VBB), Stockholm.

the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago explored the temple of Beit el Wali.

Teams carrying out excavations also recorded rock inscriptions. All these missions used photogrammetric maps prepared by the French National Geographical Institute in collaboration with the Egyptian armed forces. The maps, which were fully developed in Egypt, were made available to all those working on the salvage projects. All excavations, investigations and archaeological surveys were completed by 1965, the date at which the waters of the High Dam lake began to rise.

Work on transferring the temples also started in 1960. At that date, the Egyptian Government undertook to move the temples of Taffa, Dabod and Kertassi at its own expense. In 1962, it assumed the technical and financial responsibility of moving the temples of Dakka, Maharraqa and Dendur. The Federal Republic of Germany, meanwhile, took on the task, between 1961 and 1963, of salvaging the temple of Kalabsha and rebuilding it to the south of the High Dam, on the site where the Egyptians re-erected the kiosk of Kertassi. All these temples date from the Graeco-Roman period.

Egypt also moved the temples of Beit el Wali and of Wadi es Sebua, reconstructing the first near the temple of Kalabsha, and the second just five kilometres from its original site, 150 kilometres from Aswan. Both these temples were among the six monuments built in the thirteenth century BC by King Ramses II. Egypt also undertook to move the tomb of Pennut, a nobleman who lived under King Ramses VI in the twelfth century BC, and relocate it on the new site of Amada in the lee of the moun-

Contractor: Joint Venture Abu Simbel, a consortium consisting of the following firms: Hochtief, Essen; Atlas, Cairo; Grands Travaux de Marseille, Paris; Impregilo, Milan; Santab and Skanska, Stockholm.

PHILAE

Total cost: $30,000,000, approximately, of which half was borne by the Arab Republic of Egypt and half provided by international contributions.
Organizers: The Ministry of Culture of the Arab Republic of Egypt assisted by Unesco.
Advisers: Executive Committee for the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia, composed of representatives of 15 Member States elected by the General Conference of Unesco.
Various groups and committees of experts—architects, archaeologists and engineers.
Consulting engineers and architects: Office of Dr. William Selim Hanna, Cairo.
Contractors: Joint Venture for Philae, a consortium consisting of the following firms: High Dam Company for Civil Works, Cairo-Aswan; Condotte-Mazzi Estero, SPA, Rome.

Etching of Gerf Hussein by F-C. Gau © Documention Centre for Ancient Egypt, Cairo

Above, etching dating from 1818 by the French architect François-Chrétien Gau of the temple of Ptah erected by Ramses II at Gerf Hussein, some 90 kilometres south of the First Cataract. Below, a statue of Ramses II from the courtyard of the temple. The inner sanctuary was carved into the mountain and, although much smaller and different in style, was based on that of Abu Simbel. The temple now lies beneath the waters of the Nile, but some of the statues and reliefs have been preserved.

tain. The transfer of these three monuments was made possible by a financial contribution from the United States; the cost of re-erecting them was borne by the Egyptian Government.

Egypt also moved the front section of the temple of Amada, which was built by King Thutmose III in the fourteenth century BC. The rear section of the building was salvaged by the French Government. In order not to damage the inscriptions engraved on that part of the temple, covered with plaster and painted, it was moved on metal rails (see back cover). Egypt also preserved the chapel of Ellesiya, which dates from the reign of King Thutmose III, and those of Qasr Ibrim, which were hewn out of the rock in the fourteenth century BC. In 1964, Egypt moved the temple of Derr, which had been built to the glory of King Ramses II, and reconstructed it between 1971 and 1973 near the temple of Amada and Pennut's tomb. The transfer of these last-mentioned buildings was completed by 1965.

As for the temple of Gerf Hussein, which was dedicated to King Ramses II, and that of Abu Oda, which was built in honour of King Horemheb in the fourteenth century BC, they were, for technical and financial reasons, only partly salvaged. Lastly, the Christian inscriptions from Wadi es Sebua and from Abu Oda were preserved by a Yugoslav team of archaeologists. By the time this work was completed, all the temples, tombs and chapels of Egyptian Nubia had been preserved except for the two temples of Abu Simbel and the temples of Philae, which were the subject of two special projects.

For the two temples of Abu Simbel, which had been hollowed out of the rock by

Photo Paul Almasy, Unesco

King Ramses II, two solutions were examined in detail: one called for the construction of an earth and rock-fill dam, while the other recommended that the temples be raised on hydraulic jacks. The first plan turned out to be financially onerous ($82 million), not to speak of the damage to the temples which would be caused by damp arising from capillary attraction. The second solution was estimated to cost $62 million. So both schemes were ruled out.

The Egyptian Government then decided that the two temples should be cut up into blocks and transferred to higher ground on the Abu Simbel plateau. The cost of the operation, which was originally estimated at $36 million, eventually ran to $41.7 million (18.5 million Egyptian pounds). A total of forty-eight nations helped to finance the project, with Egypt alone shouldering half the cost.

Work on the project began in November 1963, when a cofferdam was built to prevent operations being hampered by the rising waters of the lake. A drainage pipeline was then installed to pump off seepage. Scaffolding was erected to support the ceilings, sides and colonnades of the monuments. An aluminium tunnel was connected to the interior of each temple to provide access to them, then their façades were covered with sand and topped with iron screens to protect them from falling boulders as the task of removing the rocks from behind the temples got under way.

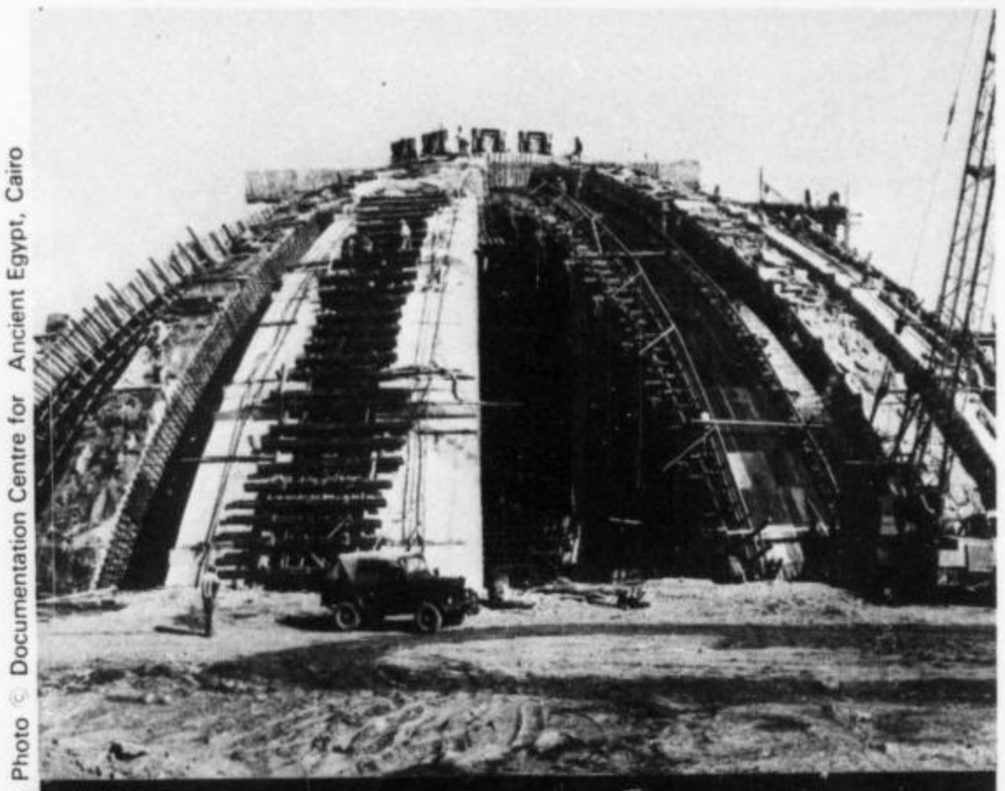
Once these operations had been completed, work started on cutting the temples up into blocks. Every attempt was made to respect the integrity of the archaeological features and inscriptions on the 1,036 blocks of stone, which weighed between seven and thirty tonnes each. Work on transferring the two temples was completed in February/March 1966. They were re-erected at the top of the mountain with the same orientation so that they would catch the rays of the sun just as before. This operation was finished in September 1967.

Then work on the final stage began: this entailed the construction, above each temple, of gigantic domes capable of supporting the rock covering that was intended to make the mountainside above the temples look as much as possible like their original site. Work ended in September 1968, and the completion of the scheme was officially celebrated by an historic ceremony on the 22nd of that month.

Thus the most imposing monument ever hewn out of rock, and the jewel of the Nubian treasures, had been saved. At the same time, the transfer of the temples fulfilled King Ramses II's dream of immortalizing his "temple in the land of Nubia, hewn into the rock, like no other ever carved before," according to the inscription on the façade of the small temple of Abu Simbel, which he dedicated to his beloved wife Queen Nefertari.

The two temples of Abu Simbel, which perhaps more than anything else symbolize the success of the International Campaign, now stand in all their grandeur high on the mountain. Behind them lies the town of Abu Simbel, which housed all those whose efforts helped to make a success of that great undertaking. This new town, with its houses, lawns and trees, today welcomes visitors from all over the world who come to marvel at man's achievements both past and present.

Photo Nenadovic, Unesco



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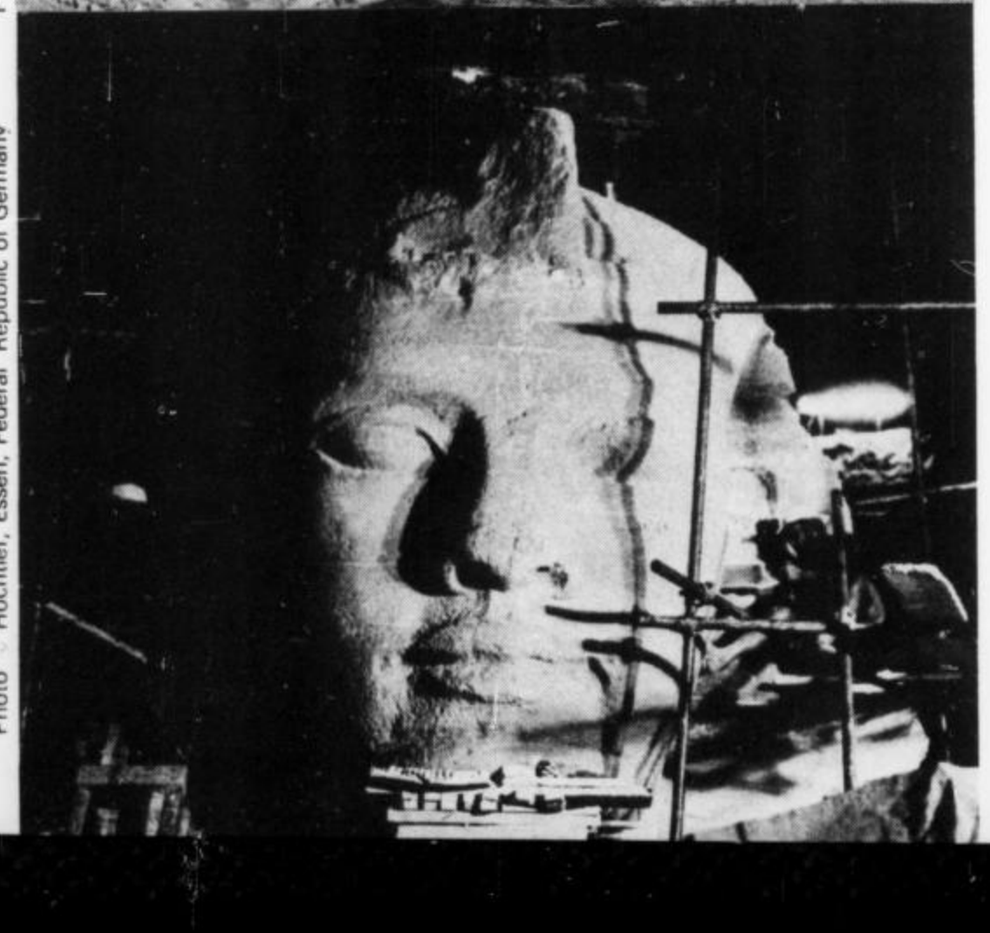

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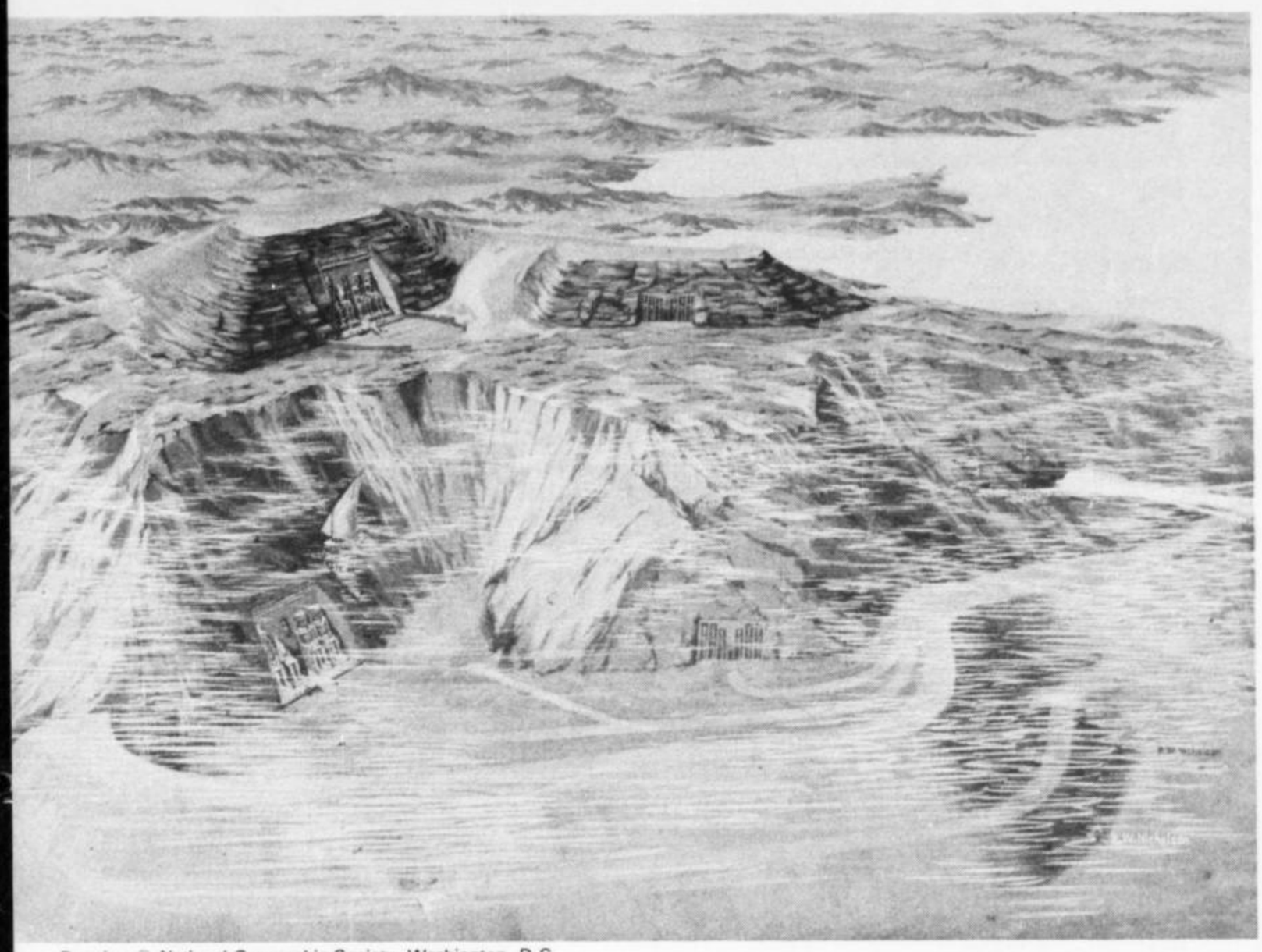
Saving the Great and Small Temples of Abu Simbel from the rising waters of the Nile must rank as one of the great engineering feats of all time. The brute force required to hew the temples from the rocky hillside in which they were carved and to lift and transport blocks of stone, weighing up to 30 tons, to the new hilltop site, 60 metres higher, was matched by the surgeon-like delicacy and precision demanded in cutting the fragile sandstone statuary into manageable blocks. Once installed on the new site the temples were topped by soaring reinforced concrete domes (the one covering the Great Temple spans 60 metres) to take the weight of the overlay that has recreated the original appearance of the landscape. Above, reinforced concrete arches 2.5 metres thick were built to support the shuttering for the construction of the dome. Above left, a view of the partially erected dome from behind. Bottom left, under the glare of floodlights the face of one of the colossi of the façade being sawn prior to removal.

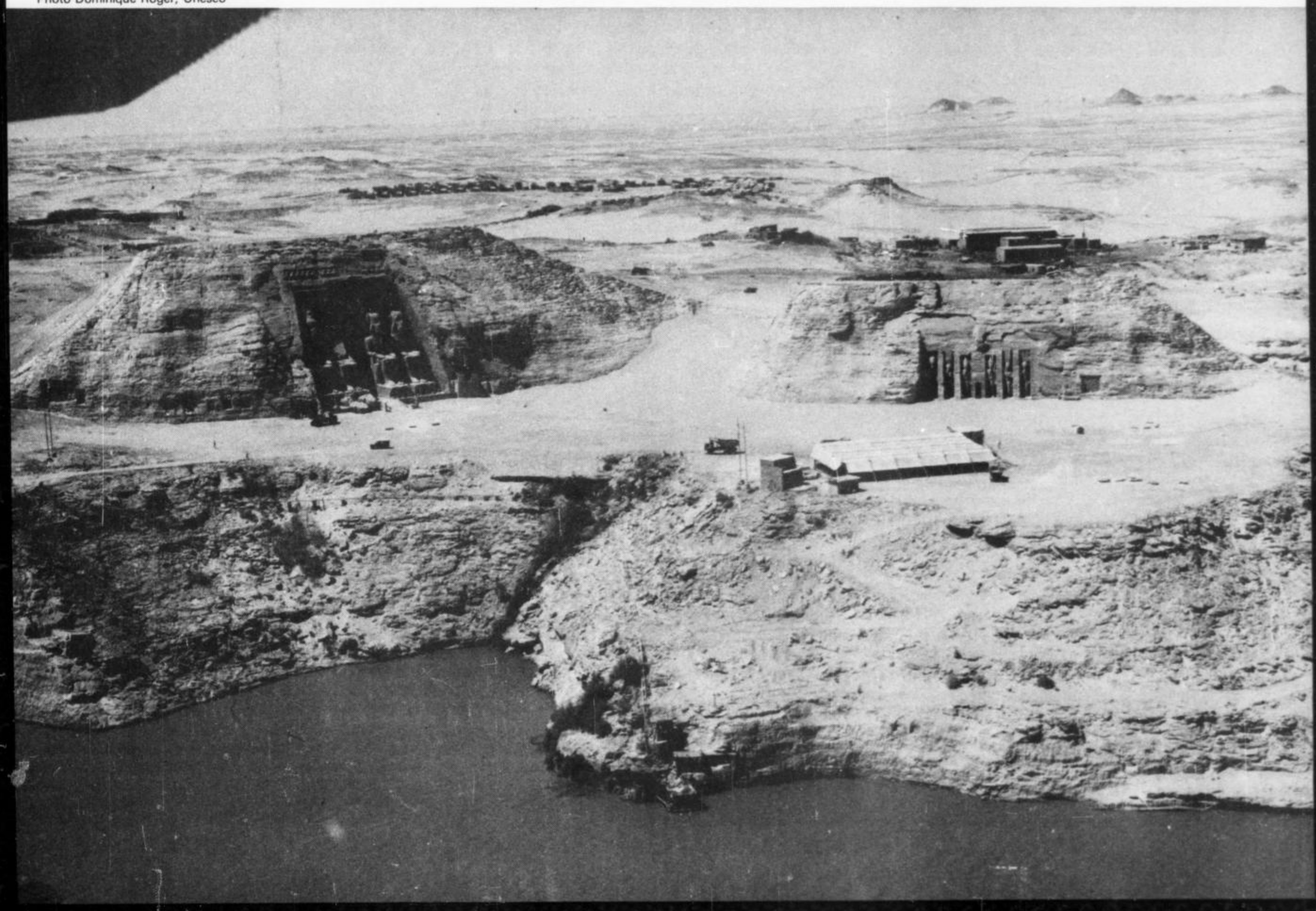


Drawing © National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C.

With the aid of royal astronomers the engineers of Ramses' day aligned the axis of the Great Temple of Abu Simbel in such a way that twice a year the sun's rays penetrated the innermost sanctuary (see photos pages 56 and 57). The artist's reconstruction, left, of the temples on their new site and the "ghost" of the old site now under water, shows the precision with which the alignment of the temples and the general appearance of the setting has been respected. The light of the sun still streams into the inner sanctuary twice yearly. Below, photo of the Great and Small Temples of Abu Simbel on their new site was taken in September 1968 just after the work was completed.

How Abu Simbel was saved

Photo Dominique Roger, Unesco



The Sudanese Government also took steps to save its Nubian monuments before they were submerged by the waters of the Nile. It organized the transfer of a number of temples, blocks and rock inscriptions in conjunction with the surveys and excavations being carried out by archaeological missions.

The temples of Queen Hatshepsut at Buhen, the temple of the god Knhum at Semna East, and the temples of Dedun and of Sesostris III at Semna West were all moved. Some blocks from King Ramses II's temple at Aksha as well as reliefs and sculpted lintels from the tomb of Djehuti-hotep at Debeira were salvaged. Also rescued were four column plinths and part of the floor of the main entrance of Thutmose III's temple at Buhen, along with three blocks of pillars from the temple of Isis put up by King Amenhotep II in the town of Buhen.

Inscriptions by the first dynasty King Djer on the rocks of the Gebel El Sheikh Suleiman near Buhen, other rock inscriptions dedicated to a viceroy of Kush by the name of Setau, and blocks from Faras were also moved to safety. The Sudanese Government transferred all these antiquities to the Khartoum Museum.

Unfortunately, however, nothing could be done to prevent the waters of the lake from engulfing every aspect of Nubian life, both in Egypt and in the Sudan, as far south as the Dal Cataract. Nubian houses, with their decorated walls and façades, villages, even whole towns vanished for ever. Lush, green trees and palms still bearing their clusters of dates—Nubia's most delicious fruit—were consigned to a watery grave. The Nubians tearfully gathered together their belongings, beasts of burden and chickens, and set off for a new life in another town, Kom Ombo. But they never really gave up all hope of being able, one day, to return to their dear homeland on the banks of the lake.

The lake created by the High Dam continued to rise, covering more and more land on either side exactly as foreseen by the planners. Attention was then turned to the island of Philae, between the Aswan Dam and the High Dam. The temples on Philae, island of love and the "Anas el-Wagud" of legend, were submerged. Only the tops of the buildings were still visible above water. Studies on the rescue of Philae showed that the construction of a dam round the island had several drawbacks, such as the effect on the temples of damp arising from capillary attraction, very high costs, and maintenance which would require, among other things, constant pumping to deal with seepage.

The Egyptian Government then decided to transfer the temples to the neighbouring island of Agilkia, which would first be landscaped to resemble Philae. The Director-General of Unesco launched an appeal to save this "pearl of Ancient Egypt", and the project got under way in 1972. When the building of a cofferdam round the island of Philae was completed in May 1974, the water was pumped out, leaving the island high and dry. At this point, it became possible to explore the temples archaeologically and make photogrammetric records of its architecture.

Meanwhile, Agilkia was made ready to receive the temples, and foundations were laid. This stage of the work was completed by April 1977. At the same time, preparations were being made to transfer the temples. The first stage of rebuilding them began in March 1977. The blocks were moved in May of the same year, and the final stone was slotted into the reconstructed temples in August 1979. Then the final phase of the project, aimed at making the island more attractive, was set in motion: palm trees, acacias, henna, papyrus and lotus were planted so that the temples of Philae could have the same setting on the island of Agilkia that they had once enjoyed on their previous site before the building of the Aswan Dam, in other words before the turn of the century.

Among the reconstructed monuments was the temple of Augustus, the blocks of which had been recovered with the help of the Egyptian and British navies. In all, 45,000 blocks of stone made up the temples of Philae. The cost of the salvage operation came to $30 million. Twenty-two nations made financial contributions to the project, as did the World Food Programme. Egypt alone shouldered more than half the total cost.

The temples of Philae now stand majestically on the island of Agilkia, their beautiful pylons and superb colonnades enhanced by the water and granite islets that encircle them.

So at last the aspirations of both Egypt and the world at large have been fulfilled. The Egyptian Government showed great generosity. As a token of gratitude, it donated an ancient object, a vase or a statue to each nation that had helped to save the treasures of Nubia. It even made a gift of four of its temples to countries which had contributed substantially to the project: Dendur was given to the United States, Dabod to Spain, Taffa to the Netherlands, and the chapels of Ellesiya to Italy.

It will soon be time to celebrate the outstanding success of the International Campaign to save the Nubian heritage, which has proved to be a victory for world co-operation.

March 10, 1980, will be the day set aside to commemorate this enterprise, which was carried out in all the Nubian territories of Egypt and the Sudan. It is not only symbolic of the friendly and fraternal links which unite peoples with one another, but a token of mankind's potentialities and of the achievements of human genius.

The same day will see the laying of the foundation stone of the new museum of Aswan, which will house the antiquities discovered during the campaign in Egyptian Nubia.

The boat gliding along the Nile will not be dropping anchor all that soon: it is continuing its voyage to bring new life to Nubia, where there are still more temples, and where the fertile soil will never cease to give of its fruit.

Fortunate, indeed, were those who worked with us on that International Campaign, the first of its kind ever to succeed in carrying through such a remarkable salvage project.

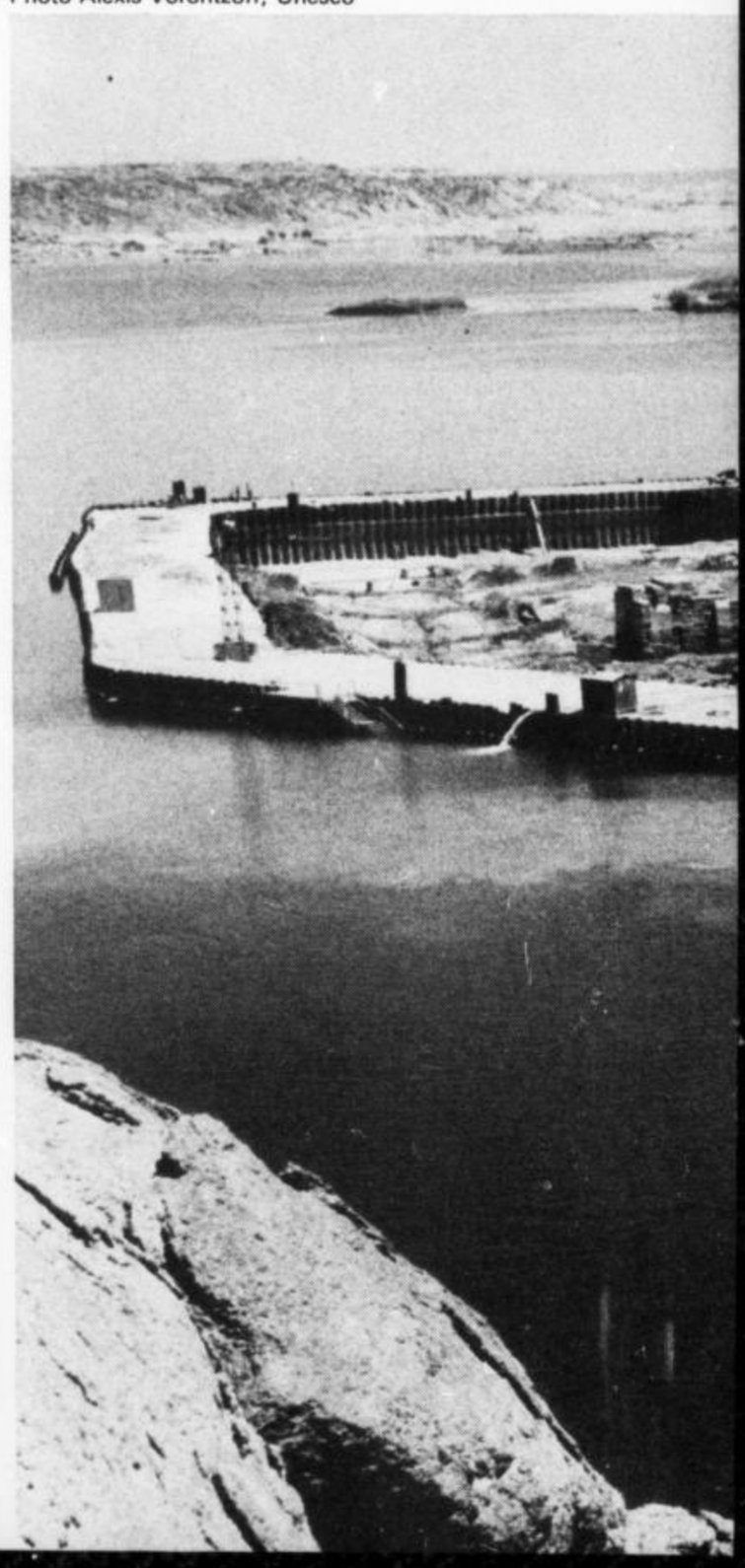
Let me pay tribute to Unesco, to the countries and organizations, to the scientists, experts and workmen who toiled night and day for years, in the freezing cold of winter or under the scorching summer sun, to bring this memorable enterprise to a successful conclusion.

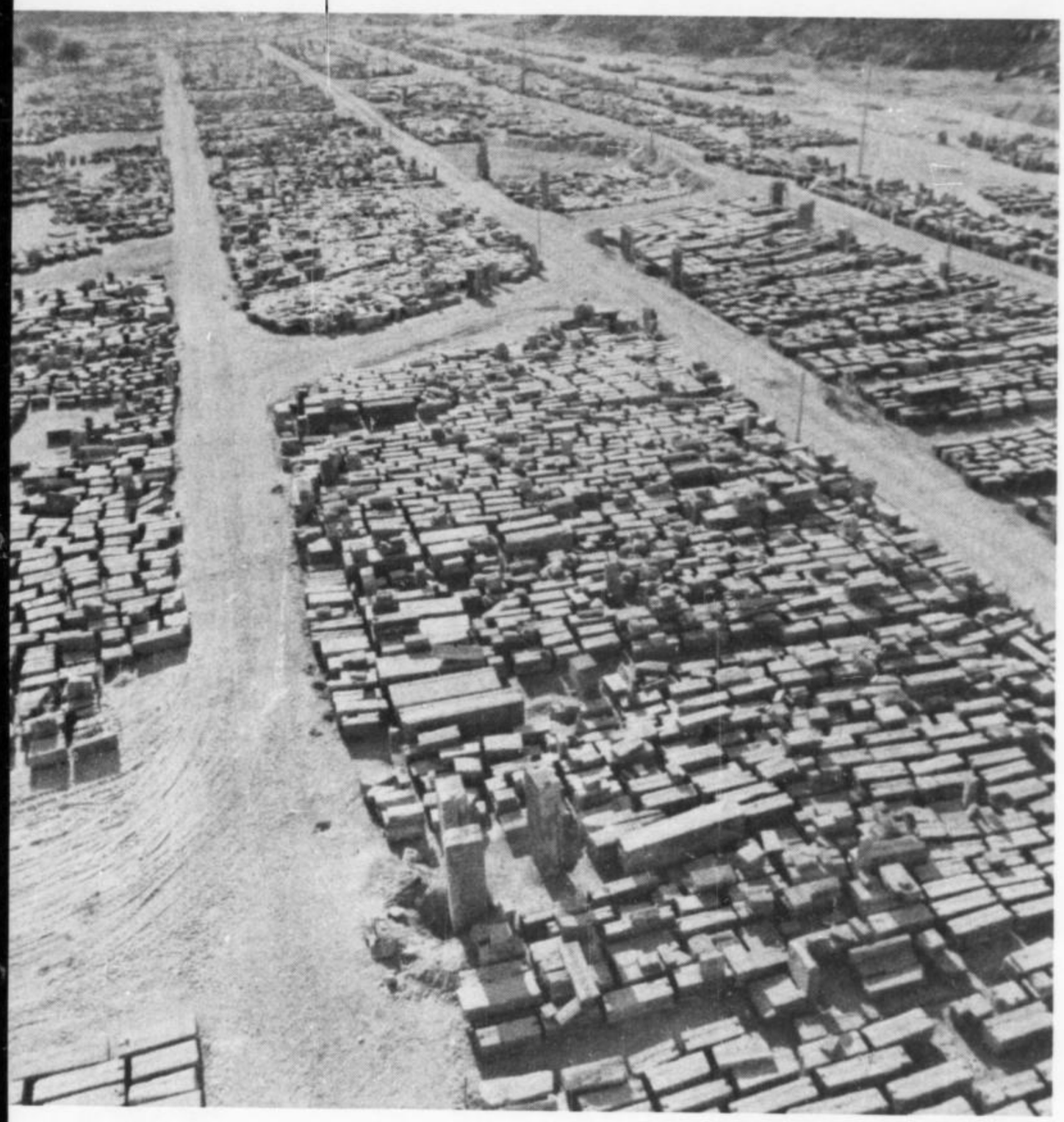
■ **Shehata Adam Mohamed**

Philae reborn

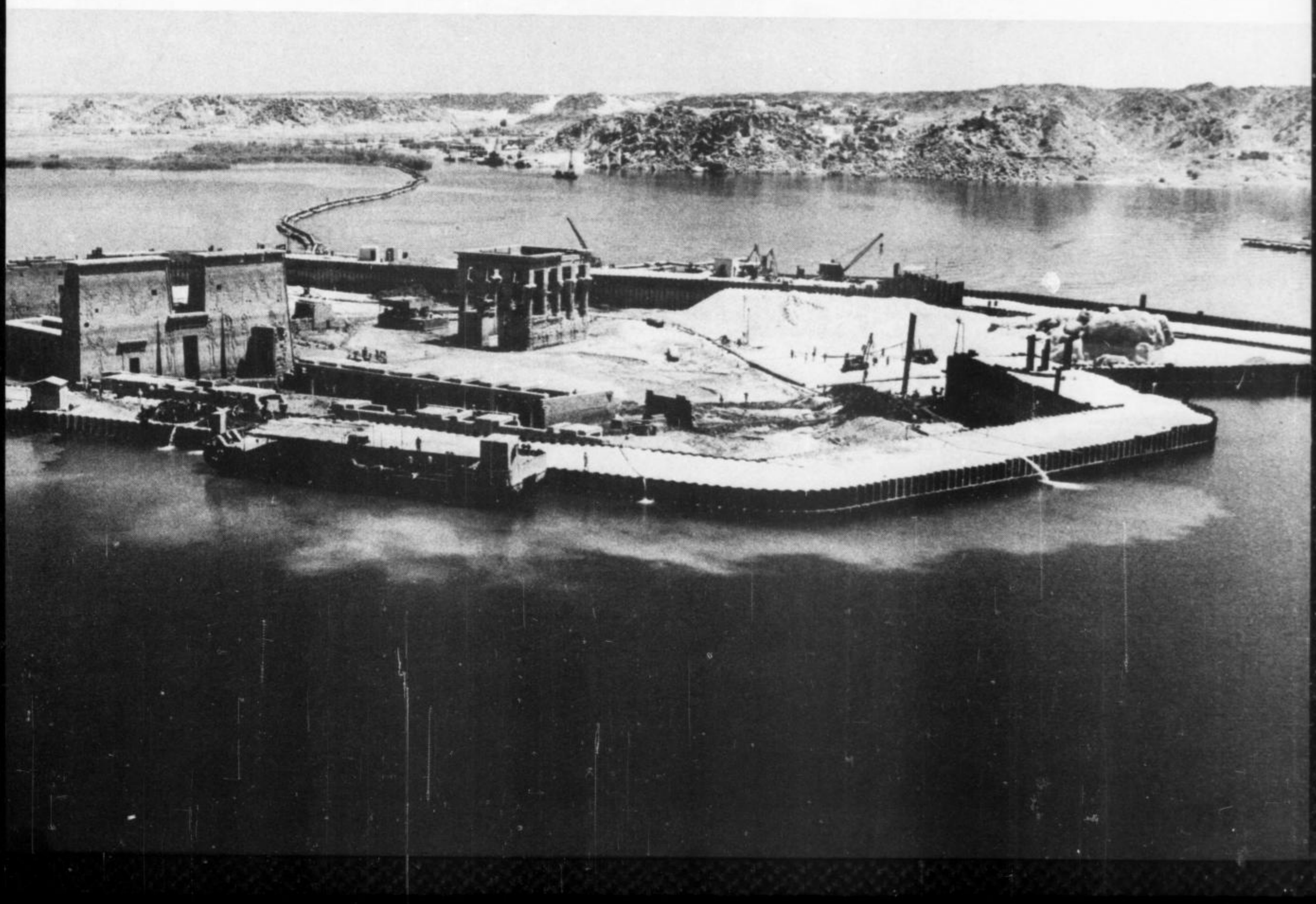
The rescue of the Philae temples, which have been rebuilt on another island, Agilkia, was the final phase in the Nubian campaign. Before work began in 1972 Philae was permanently submerged and its monuments flooded to about a third of their height (see photo caption page 46). The island was then girdled with an immense cofferdam consisting of two rows of sheet steel piling packed with a million cubic metres of sand, and the water was pumped out (below). Before being dissected into some 40,000 stone blocks and transported to Agilkia the monuments were cleaned and measured by a special technique called photogrammetry which enabled the engineers to reconstruct them exactly as before, to the last millimetre. Right, piles of stone (some weighed up to 25 tons) awaiting re-erection on Agilkia. Far right, protective scaffolding surrounds the colonnade of the famous *mammisi,* or birth-house of the god Horus, during rebuilding. The dismantling, transfer and reconstitution of the monuments (total weight 27,000 tons) was done in record time, thirty months.

Photo Alexis Vorontzoff, Unesco





Photos © Condotte-Mazzi Estero SPA, Rome



Monuments rescued

The International Nubian Campaign

Philae

Dabod

Kertassi

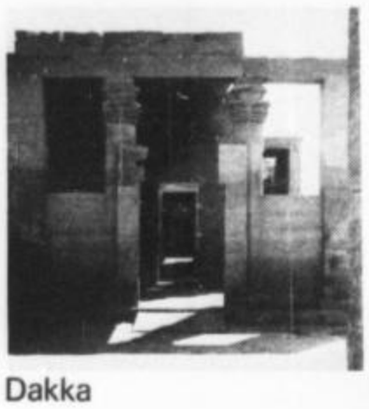
Taffa

Beit el Wali

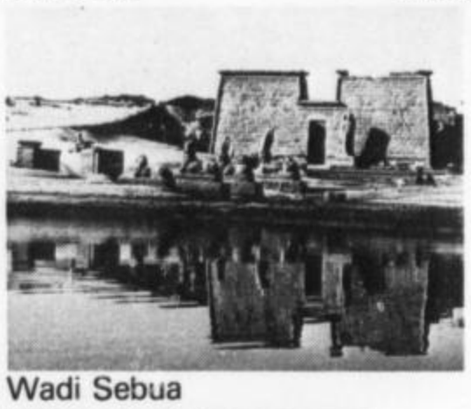
Kalabsha

Dendur

Gerf Hussein


Dakka

Maharraqa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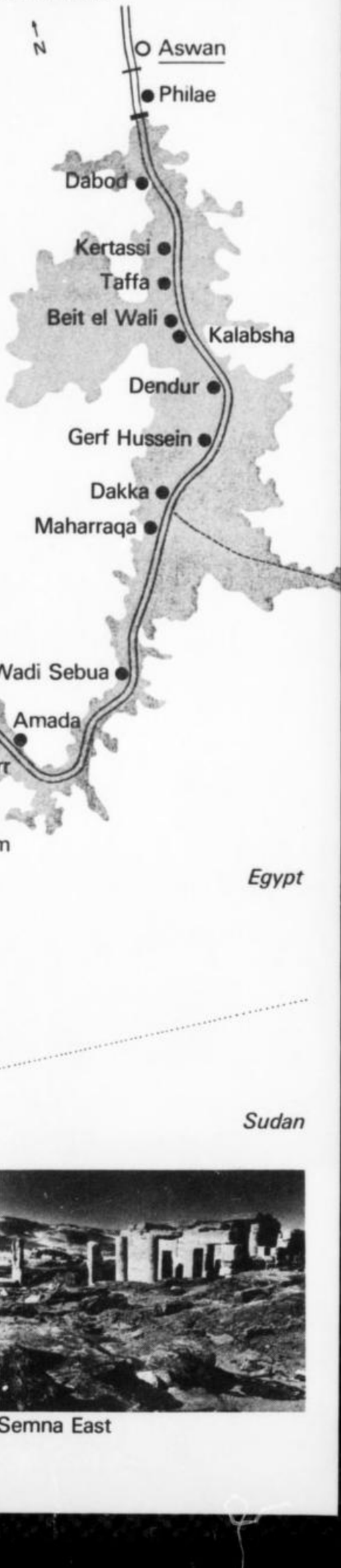


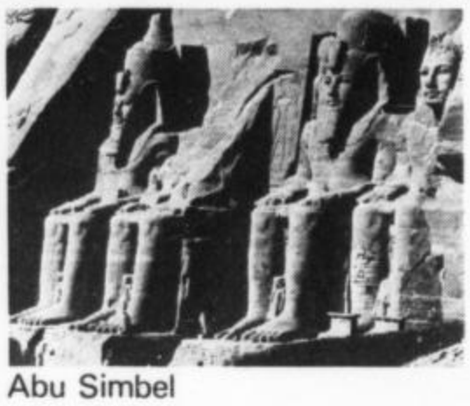
Amada

Derr

Ellesiya

Aniba

Qasr Ibrim


Abu Simbel

Abu Oda

Debeira

Buhen

Semna West

Semna East

Photo credits page 14 *Philae:* Vorontzoff, Unesco. *Dabod:* © Documentation Centre for Ancient Egypt, Cairo. *Kertassi:* © Egyptian Antiquities Service, Cairo. *Taffa:* © The Leyden Museum, The Netherlands *Beit el Wali, Qasr Ibrim:* © Almasy, Paris. *Kalabsha, Buhen, Semna East, Semna West:* © Rex Keating, Paris. *Dendur, Wadi es Sebua:* Van der Haagen, Unesco. *Gerf Hussein, Amada, Derr:* Almasy, Unesco. *Dakka, Abu Simbel:* Laurenza, Unesco. *Maharraqa, Ellesiya, Aniba, Abu Oda:* Unesco. *Debeira:* © Sudan National Museum, Khartoum. Map by Monika Jost, Unesco.

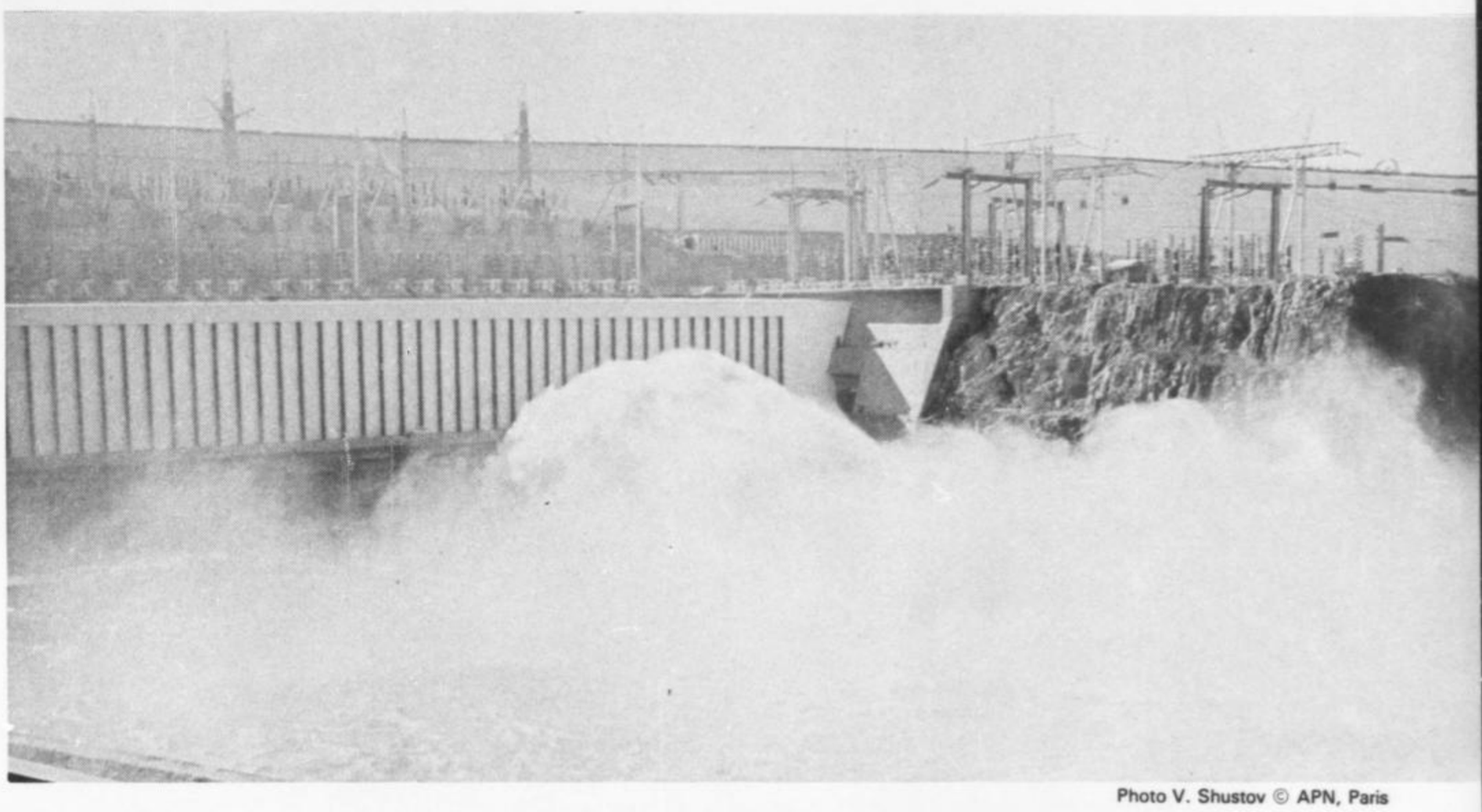


Photo V. Shustov © APN, Paris

Nearly 5,000 years elapsed between the construction of the world's earliest recorded dam, a 15-metre-high barrage erected at Kosheish on the Nile to supply water to King Menes' capital at Memphis, and the commencement of work, in 1960, on the Sadd El-Aali or Aswan High Dam (above). Four kilometres across and a towering 110 metres high, the dam itself was completed in 1964, but it took another six years before the hydroelectric installations became fully operational. The water impounded behind the dam has created a 500-kilometre-long lake, the world's second largest man-made lake (after the Kariba Dam lake in Rhodesia Zimbabwe) with an average volume of one hundred and sixty thousand million cubic metres of water. Built with the aid of the USSR, the Aswan High Dam has twelve powerful turbines with a design capacity of around ten thousand million kilowatt hours a year, an output which is conveyed by two thousand five hundred kilometres of high energy power lines to the big industrial plants and population centres of Egypt. Below, a colossus from a temple at Tebo in the Sudan on the way to its new home in Khartoum (see also photo page 17).

Photo Gunvor Jorgsholm © Pressehuset, Copenhagen

Photo © Sudan National Museum, Khartoum

The Nubian king Taharqa (690-664 BC) makes an offering to a god and receives in return the *ankh* or symbol of life. This relief from a temple at Buhen, near the Second Cataract, is now preserved in the Sudan National Museum, Khartoum.

Victory in Nubia: The Sudan

by Negm-el-Din Mohammed Sherif

THE decision to build the Aswan High Dam by the Government of Egypt had two very grave consequences for the Nubians. On the one hand, it meant the loss of their fatherland for good, and on the other hand it entailed the complete disappearance of the cultural remains of their ancestors.

The two aspects of the decision were too much for them to bear; but being fully aware of the importance of the High Dam for the economic welfare and advancement of the peoples of the Nile Valley in both Egypt and the Sudan, the Nubians willingly accepted the idea of building the Dam, thereby sacrificing their beloved, peaceful and beautiful homeland. But they were deeply concerned about the known and the unknown archaeological remains which would ultimately be lost under the waters of the proposed Dam.

Archaeologically speaking, Sudanese Nubia, unlike Egyptian Nubia, was practically unknown, for although it offered archaeological remains from the Palaeolithic period up to the conquest of the Sudan by Mohammed Ali Pasha of Egypt in 1820, it had never been thoroughly investigated. Thus it was unthinkable to the Nubians that a region of such great importance for the history of mankind in general, and that of Africa in particular, not to mention their own history, should disappear beneath the water without thorough archaeological research being carried out into it.

Moreover, a number of important known monuments were directly threatened by the new reservoir and had to be saved. But it was quite clear that the whole enterprise was beyond the technical and financial abilities of the Sudan Antiquities Service.

Faced with this distressing situation, the Sudan had no option but to take refuge in the shade of Unesco and to request aid from the international community. On 24 October 1959, the Sudan appealed to Unesco for financial, technical and scientific help to save the antiquities of Sudanese Nubia. This was followed by an appeal issued by the Director-General of Unesco to all Member States and institutions to extend assistance to the Governments of both Egypt and the Sudan so as to save the cultural heritage of Nubia.

The international response was prompt and extremely soothing to the hearts of the Nubians. The campaign to save the monuments of Sudanese Nubia began.

During the period between 1960 and 1970 the Sudan witnessed intensive archaeological work of an unprecedented kind. Nineteen foreign archaeological missions worked in the Sudanese territory endangered by the waters of the Aswan High Dam, between Faras in the north and Dal Cataract in the south.

Outside the concessions granted to these missions, the Sudanese Antiquities Service conducted with its own resources a survey whose aims were to discover and define archaeological remains worthy of excavation by foreign missions, and also to excavate any site not wanted by the foreign expeditions. This survey, carried out with the help

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NEGM EL DIN MOHAMMED SHERIF, *of the Sudan, is director-general of the Sudan Antiquities Service and played an active part in the Nubian campaign. He is also director of the Sudan National Museum, in Khartoum, and editor of* Kush, *an archaeological journal published in Khartoum.*

of a number of Unesco experts, covered the full extent of Sudanese Nubia between Faras and the head of the proposed reservoir at Dal.

Moreover, there were other surveys beside that of the Sudanese Antiquities Service. A Scandinavian Joint Expedition exhaustively explored a portion of the endangered area extending sixty kilometres south of Faras on the right bank of the Nile, excavating practically all sites in their concession area and documenting thousands of rock drawings. Other surveys in the region covered rock pictures and inscriptions as well as the investigation of Stone Age relics.

The results of the campaign in Sudanese Nubia were extremely gratifying as far as both scientific information and archaeological finds are concerned. The part of the Sudan flooded by the waters of the Aswan High Dam is now the only region in the entire country which has received any systematic archaeological investigation. Many beautiful finds have been unearthed and a great deal of information has been gathered. Now we can reconstruct in great detail the history of culture and civilization in this region of immense importance not only for the history of the Nile Valley but also for the history of Africa. In short, the scientific information these unprecedented archaeological activities yielded has enormously enriched human knowledge.

The great collections of archaeological finds acquired as a result of this international campaign have enriched many museums in different countries and have enabled the Sudan Antiquities Service to establish the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum, depicting the past of the Sudanese nation from the Old Stone Age to the advent of Islam. In the garden of this museum, monuments removed from the endangered area in Sudanese Nubia have been re-erected beside an artificial pool symbolizing the Nile, along which they had originally been built. This garden in itself has become an open-air museum.

These collections also helped the Sudan Antiquities Service to reorganize a provincial museum at the town of El-Obeir in Kordofan Province, supplementing its exhibits to illustrate all the periods in the ancient history of the Sudan, and to establish a new provincial museum at the town of El-Fasher in Darfur Province. Moreover, two other provincial museums have now been built and most of their exhibits will also be finds discovered during the international salvage campaign in Sudanese Nubia.

The archaeological work carried out in Sudanese Nubia has manifestly proved that Lower Nubia is very rich in antiquities. Moreover it has raised many questions the answers to which are believed to lie still buried under the sand in the archaeologically unexplored parts south of the Dal Cataract. To find the answers to these questions, excavations have been undertaken in that region. Ten missions from those expeditions which took part in the salvage campaign in the endangered part of

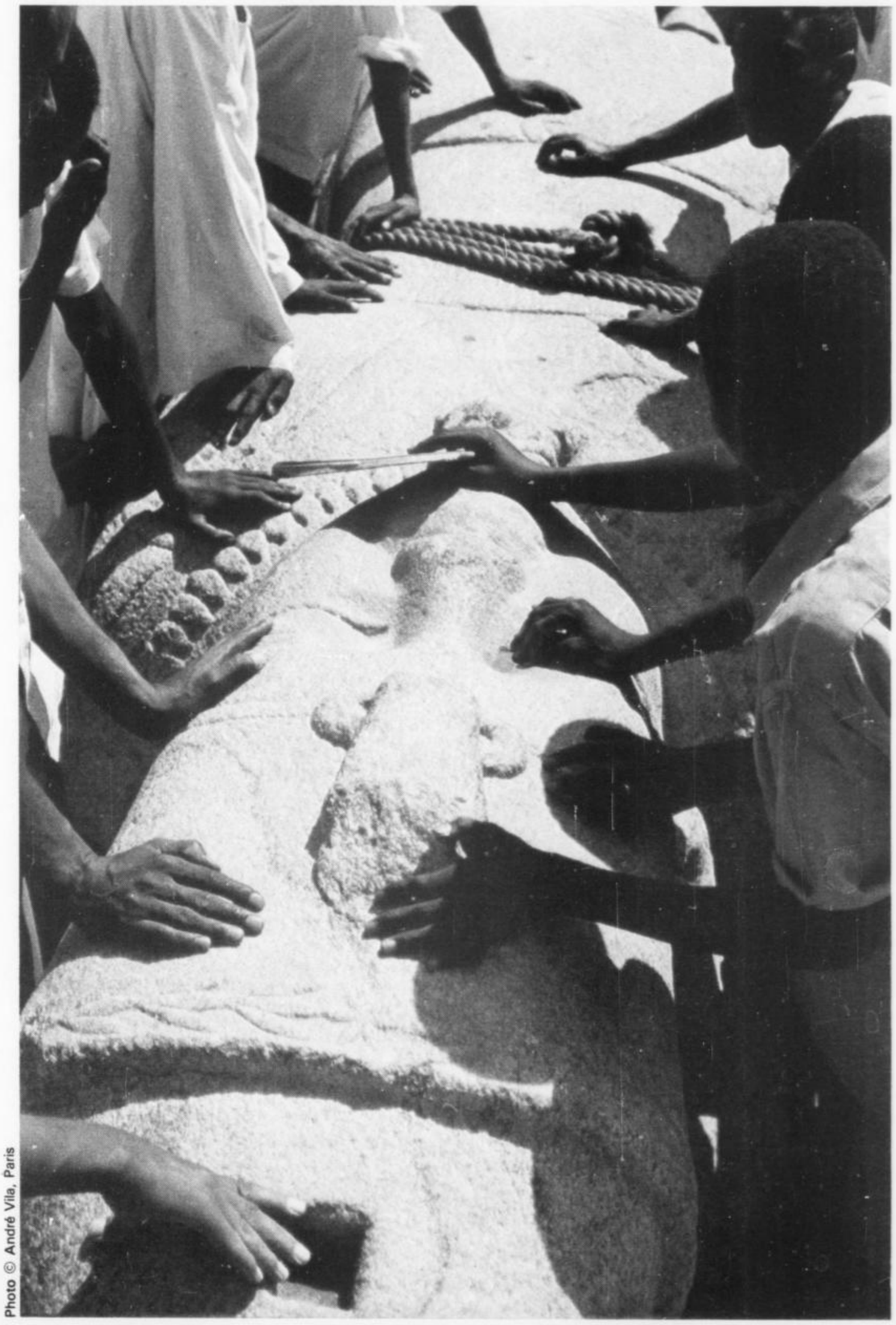


Photo © André Vila, Paris

Seven metres in height and weighing thirty tons, this colossus is one of two found lying in the sand at the entrance to a temple at Tebo on the island of Argo near the Third Cataract. The statues, one of which was found broken in two, are probably representations of the Meroitic king Natakamani (12 BC to 12 AD). The statues, which now stand in front of the Sudan National Museum, were taken the thousand kilometres from Tebo to Khartoum by special truck, (see photo page 15), by boat and by rail. Right, arrival at Khartoum.

Photo © Rex Keating, Paris.

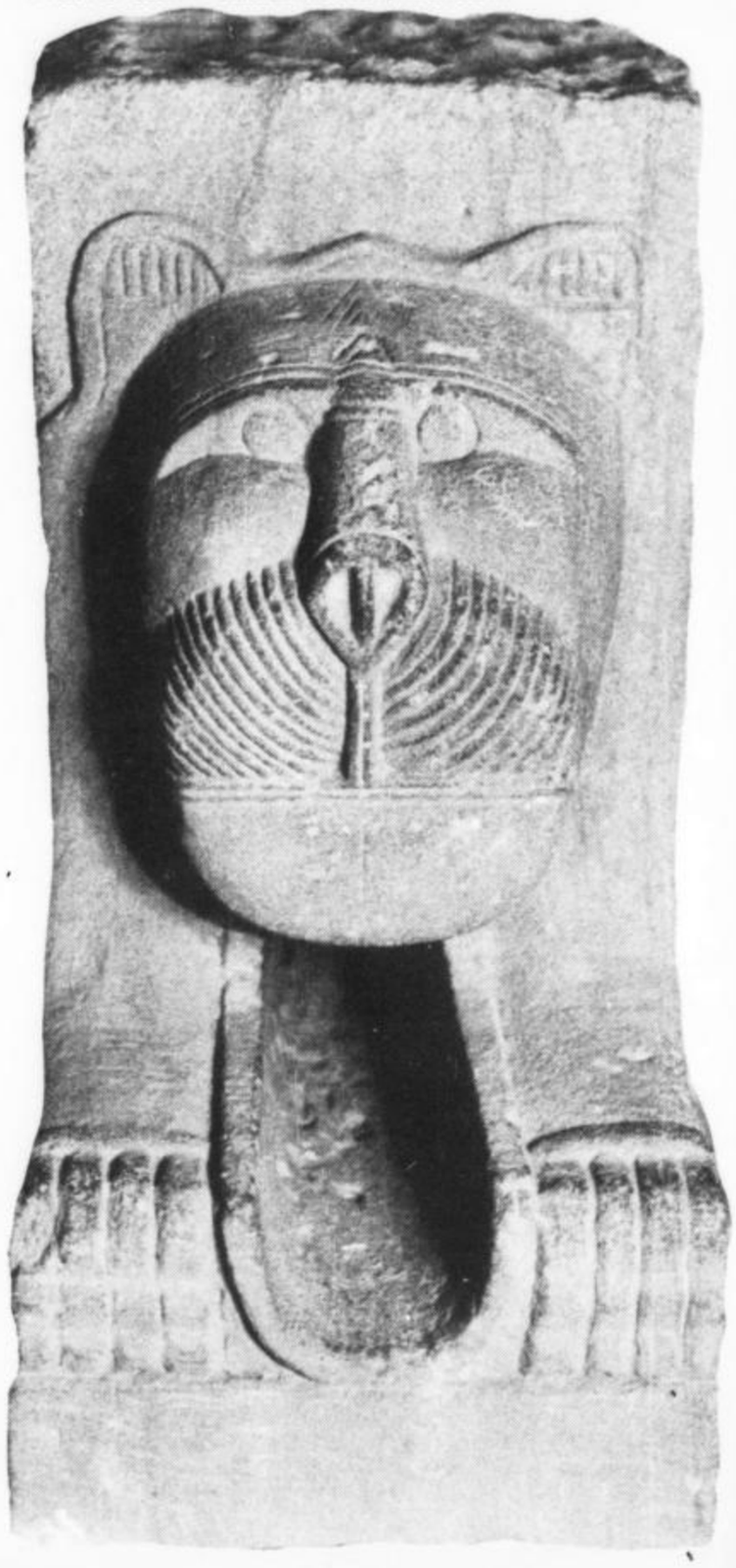
Left, the motif of this relief from a temple at Semna East, a stylized representation of the lotus intertwined with the papyrus plant and encircling a hieroglyph meaning "unite", is to be found on many monuments and temple walls in Nubia. It signifies the unification of Upper Egypt (represented by the lotus) with Lower Egypt (the papyrus).

Carved out of granite and with the figure of the king standing within the protection of its forelegs, the huge ram, below left, is one of two which once stood in front of the great temple of Amon at Gebel Barkal. The ram was the symbol of Amon whose cult was predominant at Thebes. The two statues, which date from the reign of the Nubian king Taharqa (690-664 BC), now flank the steps leading to the entrance of the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum.

The object below, found in a house at Meinarti, on the east bank of the Nile above the Second Cataract, is the topmost basin of a wine press consisting of three basins made of brick and lined with a thick coat of stucco. The lion spout formed the outlet for the grape juice which flowed down to the second and third basins. The installation was at first thought to be a public bath, possibly intended for ritual bathing, but after comparison with eleven similar installations found between Faras and Ikhmindi its true purpose was established. Dating from the later Meroitic period, it is now preserved in the Sudan National Museum.

Photo Gunvor Jorgsholm © Pressehuset, Copenhagen

Photo © Sudan National Museum, Khartoum



Sudanese Nubia have been operating there since 1964, and more foreign expeditions are expected to take the field soon.

The international campaign to save the antiquities of Nubia will go down in history as one of the most important achievements of Unesco. It has been a magnificent manifestation of human co-operation and world brotherhood. It has constituted concrete evidence that under the umbrella of Unesco the inhabitants of our planet can work in complete harmony, achieving marvels for the good of humanity, regardless of nationality, political creed or religious belief.

Thus one of the most important results of this international campaign, outside the sphere of archaeology, is that it has admirably shown the Sudanese public the importance of Unesco as a very effective instrument of international co-operation in the field of culture.

Another pleasing outcome of the international salvage campaign is the wide interest it has aroused among the Sudanese people regarding the past of their country. The keen interest Unesco has taken in the antiquities of Nubia, the intensive informational efforts it has exerted, the international reaction to the announcement of the imminent disappearance of a great number of sites and monuments in Nubia, the deep concern the whole world has expressed in connexion with the salvage question and the rush of so many archaeologists into Nubia have brought home to the Sudanese the importance of their cultural heritage; and what the archaeologists have unveiled has clearly manifested to them that they have a past of which they should feel proud.

■ **Negm-el-Din Mohammed Sherif**

Below, in the cathedral of Faras workmen remove the last basketfuls of sand and debris that for centuries had covered this magnificent Nativity scene. One of the finest frescoes discovered at Faras, it measures seven metres by four metres and dates from the end of the 10th century or the beginning of the 11th. After being painstakingly removed from the wall (see photo page 39) and fixed to a wooden backing, it was carefully wrapped and transported (it had to be carried part of the way by men on foot) to the Sudan National Museum, Khartoum.

Photo Georg Gerster © Rapho, Paris

Nubia unearthed

THE first traces of human life in Lower Nubia date from hundreds of thousands of years ago and consist of extremely primitive tools used by our earliest ancestors, long before the appearance of *homo sapiens.* But in contrast to findings in Kenya and Tanzania, skeletons or human remains found in Nubia or Egypt proper date only from rather late in prehistoric times.

The earliest remains are the traces of what seems to have been a human tragedy. Just north of Wadi Halfa, fifty-eight skeletons were found covered by a thin layer of sand and stones. Arrowheads found among the bodies and scars on the bones show that they were probably all killed in a battle or a massacre.

An analysis of the bodies and their ages in combination with what is known from food remains and other finds in settlements dating from the same period (around 10000 BC) makes it possible to reconstruct their living conditions in detail: how they hunted the big game which came down to the valley to drink before retiring into the savannah areas which are today desert. Fishing and the hunting of migratory birds also contributed to their diet. Recent research has led to the even more amazing conclusion that a primitive cereal agriculture probably already existed at this time.

Similar living conditions are also found at a later stage of prehistory, during a period with a wet climate. Thousands of rock drawings along the valley, which have all been recorded by archaeological expeditions, illustrate the fauna and the life of hunters during the very late Stone Age. The same types of rock drawings are found all over the present desert areas of the Sahara and presumably indicate connexions between the inhabitants of immense savannahs and steppes where nomads could roam freely unhindered by drought.

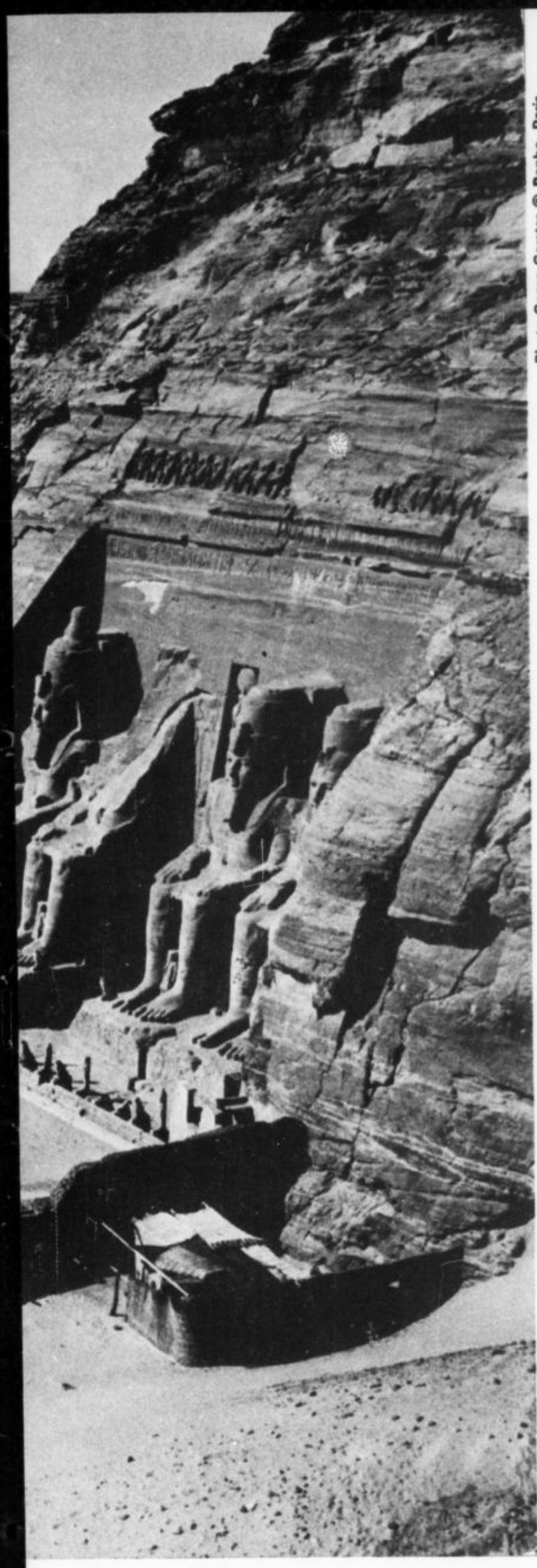


Photo Georg Gerster © Rapho, Paris

The Great Temple of Abu Simbel in its original setting, before the construction of the Aswan High Dam. The temple is now situated sixty metres higher up on top of the hill from which it was carved over 3,000 years ago (see central colour pages).

These rock carvings of giraffes were discovered by the University of Strasbourg archaeological expedition in the Tomas area in the heart of Egyptian Nubia. The thousands of rock drawings of a rich fauna, including elephant, hippopotamus, giraffe, gazelle and goat, found in this region indicate that at one time the desert of today was a steppeland rich with life.

Photo © Dominique Lajoux, Paris

From prehistory to Pharaonic times

by Torgny Säve-Söderbergh

The most interesting conclusions regarding cultural development and the interplay between different civilizations and cultures are usually drawn from simple objects such as potsherds. This was borne out by the oldest potsherds found during the Nubian campaign; the same general types occurred over vast areas from Nubia in the north to the neighbourhood of Khartoum some 1,500 kilometres further south. The entirely unexpected discovery in Nubia of types previously known only from areas much further south opens up new vistas of the cultural development of this part of Africa, where we can now study cultural interrelations over immense areas and thereby connect southern cultures to their better-known and better-dated counterparts further north.

Such so-called "techno-complexes", groups of "cultures" with similar technologies but not necessarily politically or ethnically closely connected, may have provided a basis favourable to the rise of the first States in human history. This was the case in the Egyptian part of the Nile valley, where the earliest State was organized by the Pharaonic rulers around 3000 BC.

Contemporary with this development in the north a special type of civilization, called by archaeologists the "A-Group", spread all over Lower Nubia. The Nubians of the "A-Group" produced wonderful handicraft, especially pottery, and imported luxury

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TORGNY SÄVE-SÖDERBERGH, *of Sweden, is professor of Egyptology at the University of Uppsala and president of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities (1978). He is the author of a number of articles and books including an outstanding study entitled* Egyptians and Nubians. *He has been a member of the Executive Committee of the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia since 1962 and was leader of the Joint Scandinavian Expedition to Nubia.*

Photo © T. Säve-Söderbergh, National Museum of Sudan, Khartoum

Photo © B. Williams, Oriental Institute Museum, Chicago

These clay figurines depicting a mature woman and a girl were found by the Joint Scandinavian Expedition in the tomb of a woman at Halfa Degheim in Sudanese Nubia. They date back some 5,000 years to the "A-Group" culture which developed in Lower Nubia at about the time of the first Pharaonic dynasties. They represent, perhaps, a kind of magic "insurance" to guarantee a life after death, rather like certain Egyptian funerary statuettes. The terracotta hippopotamus head, is from Qustul in Egyptian Nubia and also dates from the "A-Group". The stylized head was probably part of a statue of a complete animal; it must have been of considerable size since this fragment alone measures 19.7 cm in height.

goods from the Pharaonic State in the north.

Rich tombs excavated by a Chicago expedition near Qustul just north of the Sudanese frontier indicate the presence of a political centre ruled by a dominant chief or king. These tombs may even be earlier than the first royal tombs in Egypt and perhaps a development towards a centralized State had started in Nubia as well as in Egypt. But if so, this Nubian kingdom never achieved the efficiency and power of the first Pharaonic State.

To begin with, Nubia traded peacefully with Egypt to the benefit of both countries, but as the power of the Egyptians grew, they started to take by force merchandise which they had previously paid for. Before the end of the Second Egyptian Dynasty (c. 2650 BC) the "A-Group" population of Lower Nubia disappeared. They may have been massacred or driven out by the Egyptians, or they may have left this part of the Nile valley because of climatic changes.

It seems to be a common trait in the pattern of Nubian history that Nubia is poor when Egypt is rich. The Egyptian apogees often correspond to a cultural or political vacuum in Nubia. This was the case during the Old Kingdom, when Egyptian civilization reached one of its highest peaks, and Egypt was the biggest and richest State in the world of its time.

Recent research has clearly shown that there is no evidence for the assumption that the "A-Group" still existed in Lower Nubia after the first two Egyptian Dynasties, and there are practically no finds illustrating an indigenous culture in Nubia during the Old Kingdom before the Sixth Dynasty, that is, in the several centuries during which the great pyramids at Saqqara and Giza were built.

Egyptian activities in Lower Nubia are only illustrated by two find complexes. The first complex, known since the 1930s, is a series of rock inscriptions and Egyptian tools found in the quarries in the western desert, where the Egyptians extracted diorite for the famous royal statues of Chephren and other rulers.

The other complex is an Old Kingdom fortified town excavated by Professor Emery just north of the Middle Kingdom fortress of Buhen in northern Sudan. To judge from the finds, consisting of Egyptian ceramics and the remains of kilns for copper smelting, this was an Egyptian strongpoint for the exploitation of Nubian raw materials.

These Egyptian enterprises seem to have taken place during a vacuum in Nubian history, and when King Snofru tells us that he "hacked up the land of Nubia, taking 7,000 prisoners and bringing away 200,000 cattle and sheep", we are at a loss from an archaeological point of view, for no traces have been found of this population with its vast herds.

The fact that King Snofru mentions cattle as characteristic of the Nubian economy of his time indicates that his opponents were pastoralist nomads, probably living in the areas which are now desert which were more habitable at that time thanks to a more humid climate. They may also have lived in Dongola in the south where recent research has uncovered a transitional stage between the "A-Group" and the "C-Group", the latter constituting the later population of Lower Nubia.

So it seems that the farmers of the "A-Group" became nomads again, leaving Lower Nubia, either because of political or climatic factors, or maybe both.

Many questions remain unanswered. This is often the case for similar periods when there are no archaeological finds to enlighten us about what really happened. Such a vacuum also exists for nearly one thousand years after 1000 BC and again from the beginning of the Middle Ages to the 19th century AD.

Towards the end of the Old Kingdom we find a series of texts relating to the expeditions of Egyptian caravan leaders to Nubia, including the famous text of Unis in his tomb at Saqqara, and others in the tombs of Herkhuf, Pepinakht, etc., at Aswan. They tell of peaceful trade or warfare in Lower Nubia and also perhaps in Dongola.

These texts, the earliest records of travel abroad, are already classical and much has been written in attempts to reconstruct the journeys and to identify the countries mentioned. Thanks to new finds of inscriptions in Lower Nubia we are now in a better position to do so. These finds constitute the earliest remains of what archaeologists have long called the "C-Group".

We can again see how peaceful trade

developed into armed conflicts, with different Nubian tribes uniting under one leader to oppose the Egyptian attacks. The interrelations between Egypt and Nubia broke off when the centralized political power in Egypt was weakened and inner conflicts made trade or warfare abroad impossible or ineffective. Nubian civilization now developed into a cultural structure of its own, quite different from the Egyptian way of life but to some extent influenced by it, as attested by imported goods.

When Egypt was still weak after the fall of the Old Kingdom, its influence on the early "C-Group" testifies to peaceful relations and trade which benefited the Nubians. After the unification of Egypt, with the rise of the 11th Dynasty, the Egyptian rulers tried to re-establish their prestige in Nubia by more violent means and there was a decline in the quantities of Egyptian goods reaching Lower Nubia. At the same time Egyptian texts tell us that the Nubians were made to pay tribute, thus bringing about a negative balance in the exchange to the detriment of the Nubians.

Egypt regained its full power with the 12th Dynasty and conquered Lower Nubia as far as Semna in the region of the Second Cataract. Thanks to the epigraphic expeditions in the 1960s, especially that of Czechoslovakia, we now have new historical documents relating to this conquest, and the excavations at Buhen, Mirgissa, Semna and at other sites have given us an insight both into the sophisticated art of fortification practised by the Egyptians and into the history of the military occupation (see article page 62).

The chain of Egyptian fortresses in the region of the Second Cataract was constructed to defend the Egyptian border at Semna and to protect the trade route southwards. To the south of the Egyptian frontier was the realm of the "Ruler of Kush", with its capital at Kerma in Dongola and a subsidiary centre on the island of Sai, to judge from recent excavations there.

The culture of Kerma was already known long before the Nubian Campaign through excavations by the American archaeologist G.A. Reisner before the First World War. The main monuments were a huge brick building, called the Western Deffufa, and a cemetery with what seems to be the first large royal tombs in Africa outside Egypt. The rulers were interred with their wives in a central chamber, and their courtiers, sometimes up to 400 individuals, were buried alive in a corridor on both sides of the royal burial chamber.

Some of the objects found are indigenous, but so many Egyptian goods were found that Reisner even came to believe that the tombs were those of Nubianized Egyptians. Later analysis has shown that this interpretation is untenable.

The wealth of the Kerma kingdom is illustrated by these archaeological finds, and the Egyptian defence system against the Kerma rulers shows their political and military strength.

After the end of the Middle Kingdom and at the time when foreigners, the so-called Hyksos, ruled Egypt, the military control of Lower Nubia ceased and the fortresses were abandoned. This is when the kingdom of Kerma flourished, and the richest and largest tombs date from this period. Lower Nubia now belonged to the realm of the ▶

These curious, well-like structures are in fact tombs in a typical "C-Group" cemetery discovered at Serra West, in Sudanese Nubia. They date from about 1900 BC.

This terracotta woman's head, 5.4 cm high, was found in the cemetery at Aniba in Egyptian Nubia. It dates from between 1900 and 1550 BC and is a product of the "C-Group" culture. The eyes and mouth are portrayed by simple horizontal incisions. The holes at the back of the head represent the hair.

Photo Alexis Vorontzoff, Unesco, © Egyptian Museum of Karl Marx University, Leipzig

Photo © Joint Scandinavian Expedition

Photo © Oriental Institute Museum, Chicago

Discovered in a "C-Group" cemetery at Adindan, this terracotta bowl measures 13.9 cm in diameter and is decorated with three rows of unhorned cattle. It dates from between 1900 and 1650 BC.

"Ruler of Kush", who probably resided in Kerma; Egyptians in his service have left inscriptions in the former Egyptian fortress of Buhen, which was now a Kushite political centre in Lower Nubia.

The Unesco campaign demonstrated that many problems could not be solved in Lower Nubia because of lack of evidence: the disappearance of the "A-Group" and the ensuing vacuum in Nubian history; the coming of the "C-Group"; the interrelations with the south; and the nature of the Kushite domination at the time when the Hyksos ruled in Egypt. Solutions to these problems had to be looked for elsewhere, and as a result archaeological investigations were intensified at Kerma, on the island of Sai and on other sites in the Dongola province.

According to preliminary reports, the development of the Kerma culture can be followed from the Old Kingdom down to its disappearance during the New Kingdom, when Kerma was conquered by the rulers of the 18th Egyptian Dynasty. Moreover a transition from the "A-Group" to the "C-Group" during the time of the vacuum in Lower Nubia seems to have taken place in Dongola.

Three archaeological groups, probably corresponding to different ethnic groups, dominate the picture of Lower Nubia during the time of the Hyksos and the early New Kingdom: the "C-Group", the "Kerma Group" and the "Pan Graves", representing a desert tribe called the Medja (modern Bedja) and also found in Egypt as mercenaries. All three seem to have had a common origin in Dongola and were closely related to one another at an earlier stage there than when we find them further north.

Around the Western Deffufa at Kerma (where all these stages can be studied in different cemeteries) a fortified town has been found, the oldest known urban centre in Africa outside Pharaonic Egypt.

The end of the Hyksos rule in Egypt is marked by several texts of the Theban liberator of the country, King Kamose, in which the political situation is described. The Asiatic Hyksos ruled the north, Kamose the central part of Egypt down to Aswan, and the "Ruler of Kush" (from Kerma) from Aswan southwards. The Kerma domination of Lower Nubia did not change its cultural character.

The Lower Nubian civilization of the "C-Group" developed along different lines. Part of the population adhered to the old traditions in such matters as burial rites and pottery, and to this indigenous basis they added Egyptian luxury goods. Others, however, seem to have become more Egyptianized, and from now on the situation is such that it is difficult to distinguish between Egyptianized Nubians and Egyptian immigrants.

The most plausible interpretation, to my mind, is that once the Nubians were free from the Egyptian military occupation, their aversion to Egyptian culture and Egyptian goods ceased. The free Nubians were rapidly Egyptianized and did not hesitate also to call in Egyptians to serve them. As a result their power of resistance was weakened and their opposition to Egyptian aggression at the beginning of the 18th Dynasty was ineffective.

The texts of King Kamose provide some details about the interrelations between the Hyksos and the Nubian ruler of Kush. The Asiatic Hyksos in northern Egypt had tried in vain to make the Nubians, the people of Kerma, attack Kamose from the south at the same time as he was waging war against the Hyksos in the north. This plan failed for unknown reasons, and Kamose and his brother Ahmose managed to throw the Asiatic Hyksos out of Egypt and also to conquer Lower Nubia. Their successors, Thutmose I and Thutmose III, pushed further south, put an end to the kingdom of Kerma and established the Egyptian frontier at the Fourth and Fifth Cataracts, thus incorporating the whole of Dongola into the Egyptian empire.

Nubia under Egyptian rule during the New Kingdom (1550-1080 BC) provides a fascinating chapter of human history from many points of view. For this period, we have an overwhelming amount of material, both archaeological and textual, and we also know much more about the individual actors in the drama. A recent doctoral thesis dealing with the Egyptian administration of the Nubian colony, used some 800 textual or pictorial documents, to describe the administrative machinery, the persons employed and their careers, the taxes paid, and the revenue exported.

Were the Nubians replaced by Egyptian immigrants, did they leave Nubia on their own initiative or did they stay on and become Egyptianized? The Egyptian texts and pictures describing Nubia in the New Kingdom tend to indicate the last alternative.

A number of early New Kingdom cemeteries of traditional Nubian types belong to population groups which largely resisted Egyptian influence and adhered to their old beliefs and culture.

Otherwise the archaeological picture is dominated by burials of Egyptian types. How are they to be interpreted? Were their occupants Egyptians or Nubians? Here the specialists do not agree and perhaps both answers are correct. In the countryside, far away from the Egyptian administrative centres, there are strong indications that the tombs tended to belong to Nubians, and even in the cemeteries of the Egyptian towns misunderstandings of Egyptian burial customs in some cases indicate the presence of Egyptianized Nubians rather than ordinary Egyptians.

That the Egyptians did by no means exterminate or drive out the Nubian population of Lower Nubia is quite clear from the evidence from tombs of Nubian princes which came to light during the Nubian Campaign.

The older ones, from the reigns of Queen Hatshepsut and Thutmose III (about 1450 BC), were investigated by the Scandinavian Joint Expedition in the northernmost part of the Sudan, in the district of Debeira (see page 41). They belonged to two brothers, Djehuti-hotep and Amenemhet, born of Nubian parents to judge by their names. They bear the titles of Egyptian officials but also that of "Great One of (the district) Teh-khet", "Great One" being the denomination of royal persons or even kings of foreign countries. The tomb of Djehuti-hotep, the elder brother, is decorated in the style of the tombs in the capital, Thebes. The tomb of the younger brother, Amenemhet, is also entirely Egyptian and all the finds in the tomb are of good Egyptian craftsmanship.

So those tombs which are the most Egyptian by their form, decoration and burial gifts belong, according to the texts, to Nubian

CONTINUED PAGE 70

Photo © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

This terracotta pot (left) with its rounded shape and ram's head spout is typical of the "Kerma" culture which was contemporary with the "C-Group". It is 22 cm in height and dates from between 1750 and 1550 BC. It was found in 1914 by the famous United States archaeologist George Reisner who dubbed vessels of this type "teapots". Rams with horns curling around the ears were a frequent decorative motif on pottery from Kerma where sheep had religious and ritualistic significance. The identification of the ram with the god Amon, which had developed in Egypt by the time of the 18th Dynasty is believed to have originated in the ram cult in Nubia.

Photo © Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Detail from the famous painted relief in the tomb of Huy, at Thebes, the ancient capital of Egypt, depicting a procession of tribute from the southlands. Huy was the viceroy of Nubia under the Pharaoh Tutankhamun. Between the horns of the cattle can be seen the heads of Nubians adorned with feathers. The horns of the cattle terminate in the form of hands, or gloves, stretched out in an attitude of adoration.

Nubia's corridor of time

From the Kingdom of Kush to the triumph of Islam

by William Y. Adams

FOR more than five centuries, from 1580 until around 1000 BC, the region between the First and Fourth Cataracts of the Nile was ruled by Egyptian garrisons and governors, and its revenues went to support the Pharaonic regime in Egypt. When at last the occupiers went home, it was an Egyptianized Nubia (or Kush, as it was then known) that they left behind them. For millennia thereafter the people of Kush were able to sustain a high civilization of their own, and intermittently to play a part on the world stage as well.

Neither history nor archaeology provides a very clear picture of events in Nubia during the centuries immediately following the Egyptian departure. It seems however that the worship of Amon and other Egyptian

Egyptian rule of Nubia, then known as "Kush", ended sometime around 1000 BC but Egyptian traditions were maintained there for centuries by Nubian rulers who when they died were buried under pyramids. These two pyramids in the royal necropolis of the kingdom of Kush, at Meroë, were built so close together that their bases touch.

Photo Georg Gerster Rapho, Paris

Photo © National Archaeological Museum, Athens

Bronze head, left, is a likeness of Shabaqa, one of the Nubian Kings who from 751 to 663 BC ruled over both Nubia and Egypt as Pharaohs of the 25th or "Ethiopian" Dynasty. Two *uraei*, stylized representations of the sacred asp, an emblem of Egyptian sovereignty, are combined with a typically Nubian royal attribute, the skullcap, to symbolize the unification of Nubia and Egypt under one king.

Photo © Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Finely worked gold ram's head earring (6th century BC) is from a necropolis at Meroë. On the forehead are two crowned *uraei*, and a sun disc is on the head. Ram's head pendants forming part of the regalia of Kushite kings may be connected with the age-old veneration for the ram in Nubia.

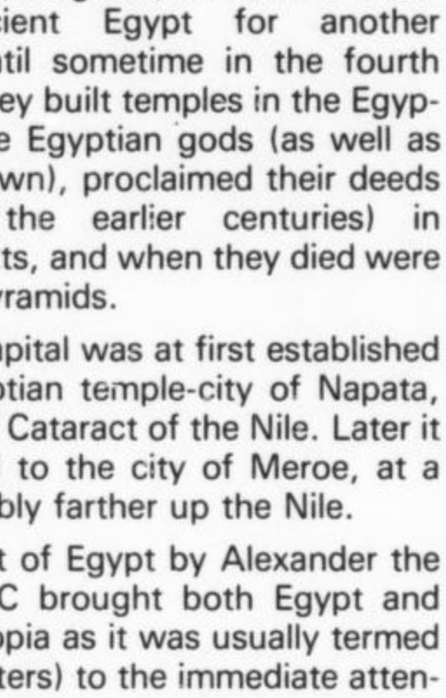

Photo © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA

The Kushite King of Egypt, Taharqa (25th Dynasty, 690-664 BC) has been described by a modern scholar as "a great personality and a great builder approaching the scale of Ramses II". The black diorite portrait of Taharqa, above, has Kushite characteristics but his features have been idealized to conform to the canons of Egyptian royal portraiture. Right, frontal view of a 75-cm-long granite sphinx of Taharqa in which his Sudanese features are far more strongly expressed.

deities was maintained at the temple cities of Napata and Kawa, either by Egyptians or by a native priesthood that kept up Egyptian traditions.

By 800 BC we see evidence for the rise of a local dynasty which may have allied itself with the priests of Amon at Napata. Only a short time later one of the Nubian princes, a certain Kashta, was invited by the priests of Amon to assume the ancient crown of the Pharaohs in Egypt itself.

Kashta duly travelled to Thebes, the ancient Egyptian capital, and was there invested with the titles and authority of the Pharaoh. Except for this one journey there is no evidence that he ever made any concerted effort to rule in Egypt. In the following generation however another Nubian ruler, Piye or Piankhi, was again summoned to the aid of the beleaguered domains of Amon in Egypt. Unlike his predecessor, Piankhi was not content merely to relieve the threat to Thebes; he chased the invaders back into the north of Egypt, subdued them one by one, and reunited the country under his personal rule. For the next 88 years, from 751 to 663 BC, the Nubians ruled over both Egypt and Kush as the Pharaohs of the 25th or "Ethiopian" Dynasty.

Nubian rule in Egypt was terminated by an Assyrian invasion in 663 BC. Back in their own country, however, the erstwhile Pharaohs from the south continued to maintain the political, religious, and artistic traditions of ancient Egypt for another 1,000 years, until sometime in the fourth century AD. They built temples in the Egyptian style to the Egyptian gods (as well as some of their own), proclaimed their deeds (at least in the earlier centuries) in hieroglyphic texts, and when they died were buried under pyramids.

Their royal capital was at first established in the old Egyptian temple-city of Napata, near the Fourth Cataract of the Nile. Later it was transferred to the city of Meroe, at a point considerably farther up the Nile.

The conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great in 332 BC brought both Egypt and Kush (or Aethiopia as it was usually termed by Classical writers) to the immediate attention of the Classical world. Diplomatic relations were established between the Nubian kingdom and the newly enthroned Ptolemaic (that is, Greek) rulers of Egypt, and over the next centuries many Greek and Roman diplomats and merchants travelled to the almost legendary city of Meroe, deep in the African interior.

Archaeology has revealed that Meroe in its heyday was indeed an impressive place. Among its buildings of stone and brick it numbered more than half a dozen temples, at least two major palaces, and a Roman-style bathing establishment. The great Temple of Amon was second in size only to the Temple of Amon at Thebes, in Egypt. Two miles away to the east, a serried rank of stone pyramids marked the final resting place of the rulers of Kush. In the hinterland to the south and east of the capital, the steppeland cities of Musawwarat, Naqa and Wad ben Naqa were almost as impressive as Meroe itself.

The establishment of Roman rule in Egypt in 30 BC was marked initially by hostilities along the Roman-Nubian frontier. However, a treaty signed in 21 BC ushered in a period of amicable relations between the two powers which lasted nearly three centuries.

The last centuries of the Roman Empire were a time of upheaval and migration in north Africa no less than in Europe and Asia. The Empire of Kush, now more than a thousand years old, was menaced by barbarian nomads —the Blemmyes and Noba— both in the east and in the west. An equally serious threat was posed by the newly emergent power of Axum in the Abyssinian highlands, which vied with Meroe in the long-distance trade of gold, ivory, and slaves to the Mediterranean lands. In 350 AD one of the rulers of Axum, Aezanas, marched to the Nile with the intention of subduing the crumbling empire of Kush. He found however that he had been forestalled by the barbarian Noba, who had already overrun the city and hinterland of Meroe and brought its ancient dynasty to an end.

The traditions of the Pharaohs seem to have died with the last of the Meroitic rulers in the more southerly parts of Kush. The next two centuries comprise a dark age from which we have neither archaeological nor historical evidence of any consequence. But in the northern districts, on the frontiers of Roman Egypt, Pharaonic traditions persisted a little longer in the successor kingdom of Ballana, or Nobatia as it was later to be called.

Our principal knowledge of this kingdom comes from the opulent mound-tombs of its rulers, in the great twin cemeteries of Ballana and Qustul close to the present Egyptian-Sudanese border. Here we can find evidence for the continued worship of the Egyptian deity Isis, and for the continued use of some of the traditional Pharaonic insignia by the Ballana rulers. A short distance further north, at the fortified citadel of Qasr Ibrim, there is also evidence for the continued use of the Meroitic system

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WILLIAM Y. ADAMS, *of the United States, is professor of anthropology at the University of Kentucky. During the late 1950s he was director of archaeological salvage excavations in Glen Canyon on the Colorado River. Invited by Unesco and the Sudanese Government to assist in the salvage operations in Nubia, he planned and carried out excavations for the Sudanese Antiquities Service from 1959 to 1966 and co-ordinated the activities of fourteen other expeditions. He is the author of an important book entitled* Nubia, Corridor to Africa, *Allen Lane, London, 1977.*

Photo Alexis Vorontzoff, Unesco © British Museum, London

Rare sandstone head, right, with its small mouth, pointed face and curly hair, is a funerary object produced in Nubia during the so-called "Meroitic" period which takes its name from Meroë, the capital of the Nubian Kushite kingdom for some six centuries until the 4th century AD. Almost life size, it was discovered in a child's grave at Amir Abdallah by a Franco-Sudanese archaeological expedition.

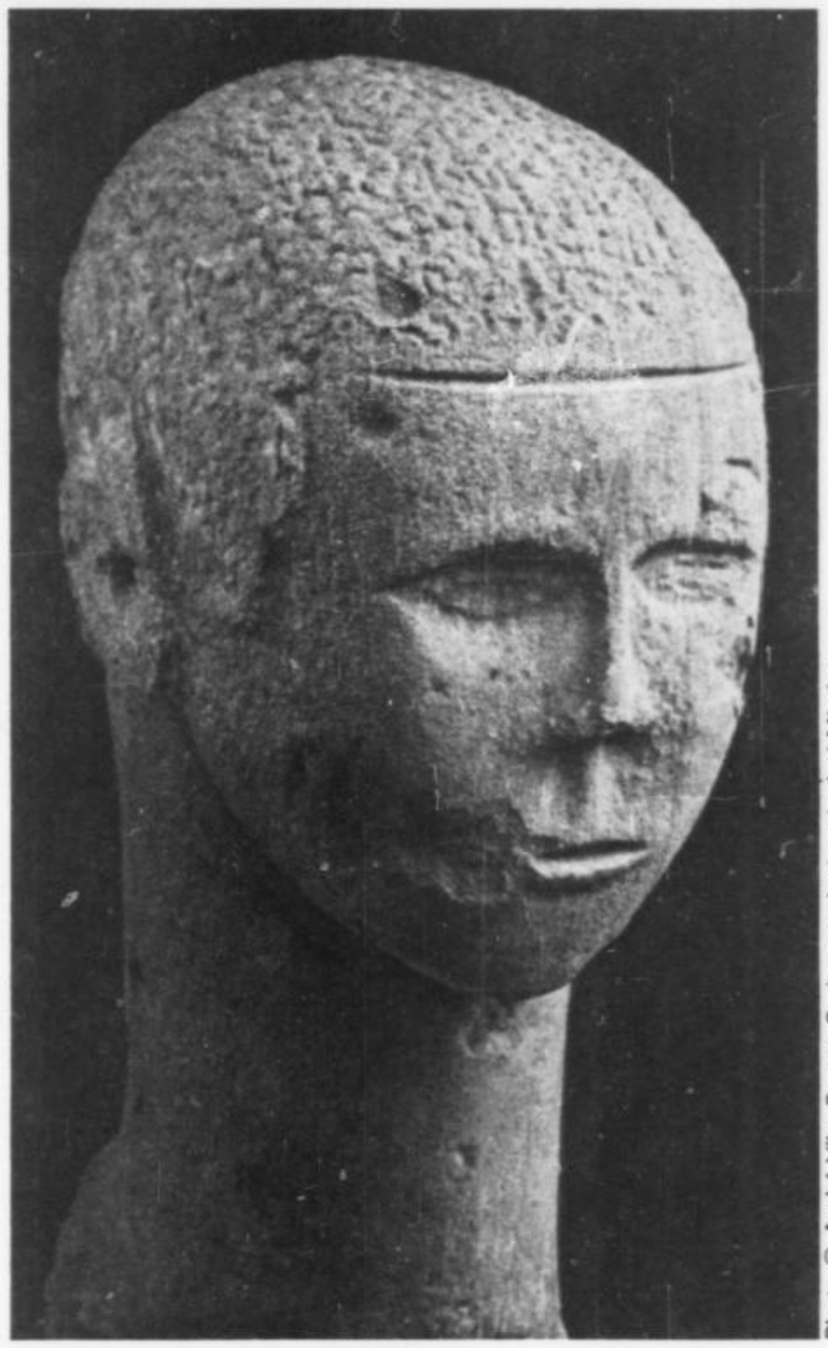


Photo © André Vila, Franco-Sudanese Archaeological Mission

of alphabetic writing, which had been developed in the later centuries of the empire of Kush (see inside back cover).

A new beginning in Nubian history is marked by the introduction of Christianity in the middle of the 6th century. Ecclesiastical historians suggest that at this time there were three independent Nubian kingdoms: Nobatia in the north, Makouria in the region between the Third and Fourth Cataracts of the Nile, and Alwa around the junction of the Blue and White Niles. The conversion of all three kingdoms was effected before the end of the 6th century, a fact which is attested archaeologically not only by the appearance of many churches but by an abrupt change in burial ritual all over Nubia at the same time.

About a century later the two northern Nubian kingdoms of Makouria and Nobatia were consolidated under one ruler. The royal residence was at Old Dongola, in the territory of Makouria, but the old territory of Nobatia retained a separate name and identity. It was governed by a viceroy called the Eparch of Nobatia.

Less than a century after the Christianization of Nubia, Egypt fell to the armies of Islam. For a long time afterward however the bulk of the Egyptian population remained Christian, and the indigenous Coptic Church continued to prosper even under Arab rulers. It was with this native Egyptian church that the Christians of Nubia were affiliated. Their bishops were appointed by the Patriarch of Alexandria, and many of them were of Egyptian nationality.

Almost immediately after their conquest of Egypt the Arabs tried to add Nubia to their domains, but two separate invasions in 642 and in 652 were successfully repulsed. The Nubians and the rulers of Egypt then concluded a treaty, called the *Baqt,* which guaranteed the territorial integrity and the

The production of highly distinctive forms of decorated pottery was among the remarkable achievements of Nubia during the Meroitic period. This red brown earthenware pot with black and white decoration (2nd to 3rd century AD) was unearthed at Karanog (Egyptian Nubia). The stylized leafy vine branches encircling its shoulder indicate that it was produced by a school of artists whose trade-mark was the vine motif. Its body is adorned with antelopes, plants and birds. Other works by the same artist, dubbed the "Antelope Painter", have been identified.

Photo © Egyptian Antiquities Service, Cairo

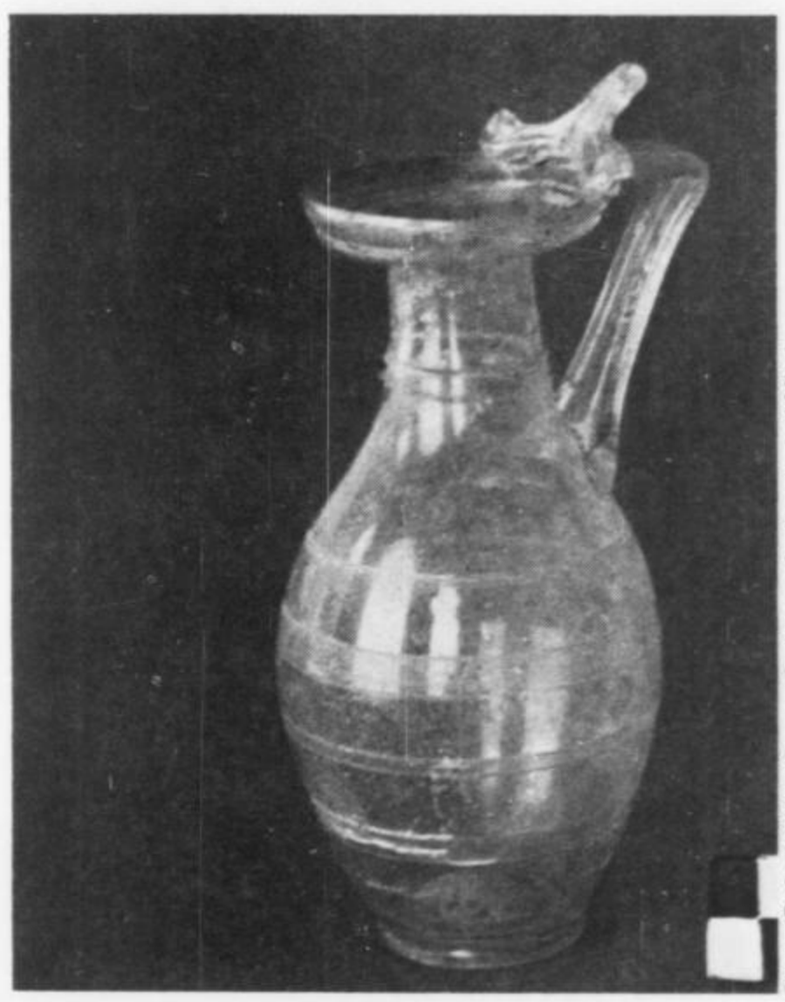


Photo © André Vila, Franco-Sudanese Archaeological Mission

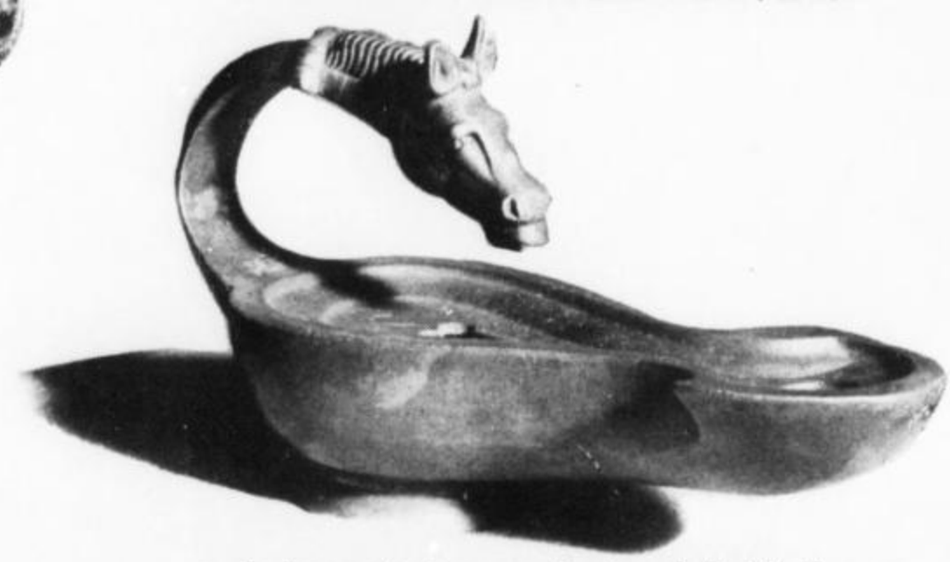
The sides of this delicate glass vessel (1st-2nd century AD) are less than a millimetre thick. Glass bottles, flasks and beakers found in the graves of Meroitic Nubians are thought to have been largely imported from Egypt or even further afield.

Photo © Egyptian Antiquities Service, Cairo

Photo © Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

Bronze oil lamp with horse's head handle, below, was found in a grave at the fortress of Qasr Ibrim during the excavation campaign of 1961-1962. Probably dating from the 2nd or 3rd century AD, it reflects Hellenistic influences but is thought to have been produced in Nubia.

Photo A. Vorontzoff, Unesco © British Museum, London



Silver crown and bronze oil lamp in the form of a man's head (above) together with the remarkable wooden chest with ivory inlays (below) are part of a sensationally rich find made over forty years ago in a Nile-side royal cemetery at Ballana. They date from the 4th-5th century when Ballana was the centre of a kingdom which flourished in northern Nubia on the frontier of Roman Egypt. Fastened to the circlet of the crown, which is richly encrusted with semi-precious stones and glass, are five winged *uraei* which show how ancient Pharaonic traditions had survived into a period when Hellenistic and Byzantine influence was very strong in Nubia. The chest (late 4th century) has the shape of a multi-storied house. Its ivory panels are incised with Greek and Egyptian gods including Pan, Zeus, and the Egyptian god Bes.

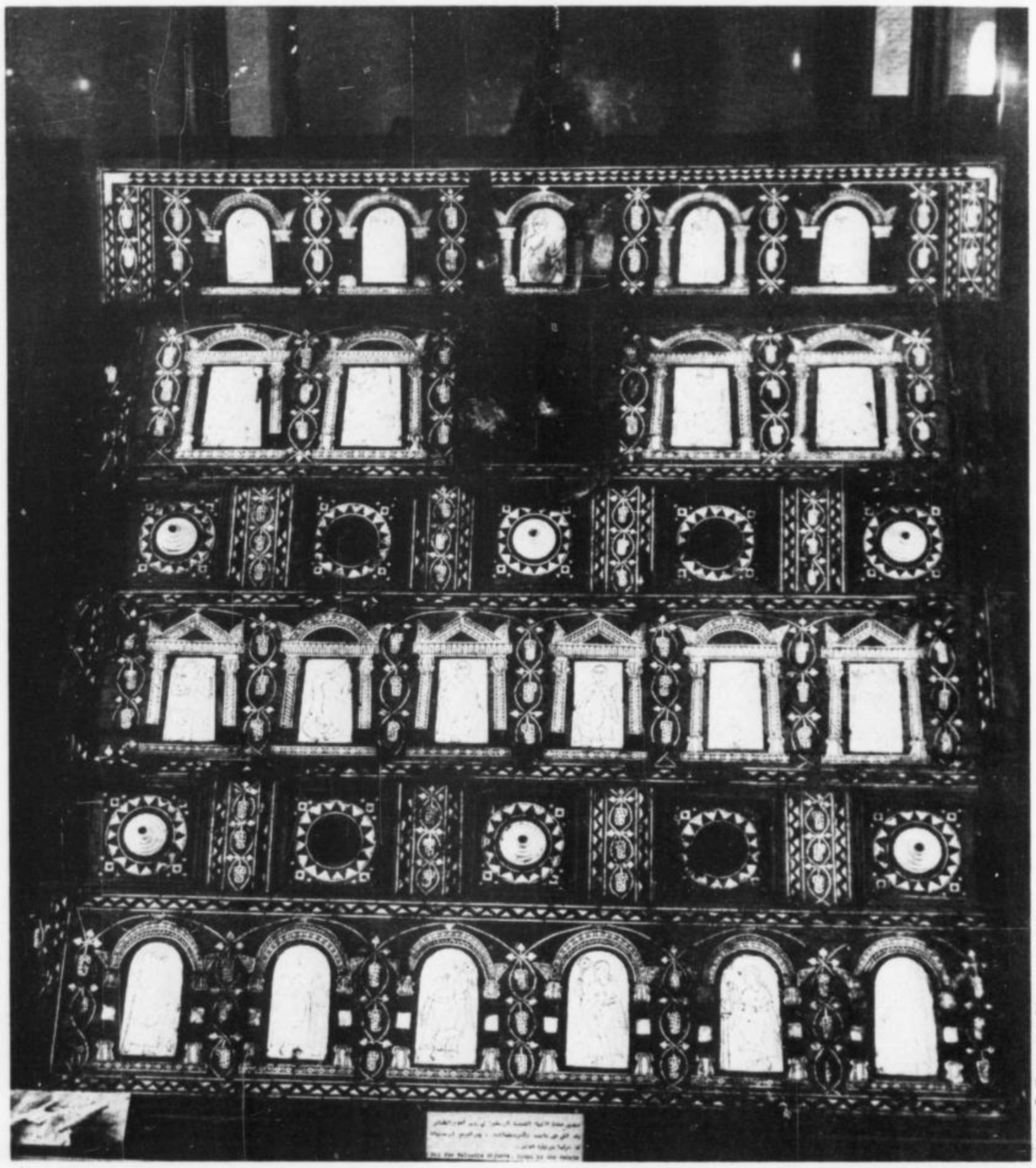


Photo © Egyptian Museum, Cairo

independent sovereignty of Nubia for centuries to come.

Protected by the *Baqt* treaty, and revitalized by zeal for its new Christian faith, Nubia in the Middle Ages entered a second golden age of peace and prosperity. Religious art, architecture, and literature flourished, exhibiting a combination of Coptic and Byzantine influences as well as some strictly indigenous elements. The court at Dongola was organized along Byzantine lines, as were the legal institutions of the northern Nubian kingdom.

Both Makouria and Alwa evidently prospered from the supply of African goods to the Islamic empires along the Mediterranean littoral.

The 200-year episode of the Crusades gave rise to a new species of military feudalism whose effects were felt alike in Europe, in the Near East, and in north Africa. In Egypt this tendency culminated in 1250 in the establishment of the dynastic quarrels which weakened and undermined the Christian kingdoms, and provided a fertile field for Mameluke intervention.

A final blow was dealt to the medieval monarchies by the migration into the Sudan of a great many Arab nomads who had been displaced from Egypt by the harshly repressive measures of the Mamelukes. At first they moved southward through the Red Sea hills, but gradually they spread westward to the Nile Valley and beyond, overrunning and destroying the already weakened Christian monarchies. In Makouria and in Alwa the last vestiges both of central authority and of the organized practice of Christianity died out around 1500 AD.

We know little about events in Nubia during the centuries following the destruction of the medieval kingdoms. It is evident however that the disappearance of an organized faith left a fertile ground of activity for wandering Islamic teachers and mystics, for within a matter of two or three centuries the whole of the northern Sudan was converted to the faith of Islam.

When the Pasha Mohammed Ali, founder of the modern Egyptian state, conquered the Sudan in 1821, he found the whole country united in the Islamic faith although politically it was divided into more than a dozen petty principalities.

■ **William Y. Adams.**

THE NUBIAN CORRIDOR IN AFRICAN HISTORY

Over the last 3,000 years the Nubians have been participants in each of the major civilizing waves that have swept along the north African shore: the ancient Egyptian, the Classical, the medieval Christian, and the Islamic. They have moreover been steadfastly loyal to each. Both the traditions of the Pharaohs and those of medieval Christianity lasted longer in Nubia than in Egypt itself, and today the Nubian people are famous for their Islamic piety.

Nubia was and is poor in agrarian resources. Its agricultural economy could do little more than feed its own rather limited population. The basis of Nubian prosperity, like that of all later African civilizations and empires, was the supply of various kinds of African exotica that were always coveted by the peoples of the Mediterranean littoral. In this category were gold, tropical animal skins, ostrich feathers, ivory, ebony wood, incense, and dark-skinned slaves.

Nubia was, in short, the first and most enduring of the great African trading empires. Its prosperity waxed and waned partly in response to the demand for exotic luxuries by the Mediterranean peoples.

For almost 3,000 years, from the dawn of history until the last centuries BC, the Nile corridor represented the only safe avenue of commerce across the Saharan barrier, linking the African coast with the Mediterranean coast. So long as that was true the Nubians, as occupants of the corridor, enjoyed a monopoly on the trade of African goods to the north. The Nile monopoly was however threatened eventually by the opening of maritime commerce in the Red Sea.

A short time later the privileged position of Nubia was further undermined by the introduction of the camel and the development of trans-Saharan caravan trade. Gold, ivory, and slaves now flowed in increasing quantities across the desert to the port cities of north-west Africa. In the interior, new African civilizations and empires—Ghana, Mali, Songhai, and Kanem-Bornu—arose as a direct consequence of this trade. But the final *coup de grace* to Nubian prosperity and to the strategic importance of the middle Nile Valley was dealt by the opening of European maritime trade with the west African and Guinea coasts, beginning with the Portuguese explorations of the 15th century. The long and sometimes hazardous Nile corridor route was no longer an effective competitor with the European sea routes, and Nubia at the end of the Middle Ages subsided at last into a geopolitical backwater.

■ W. Y. A.

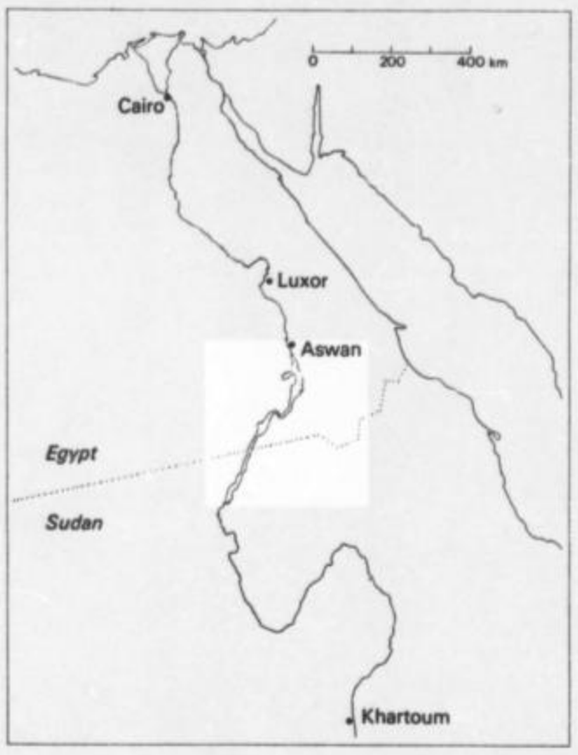
Sandstone relief from Christian Nubia, below, was carved in the early 7th century as part of a frieze in the cathedral at Faras where it was discovered by the Polish Archaeological Expedition (see page 39). The bird with its head turned was adopted from Egypt, where it was a frequent motif in early Christian iconography.

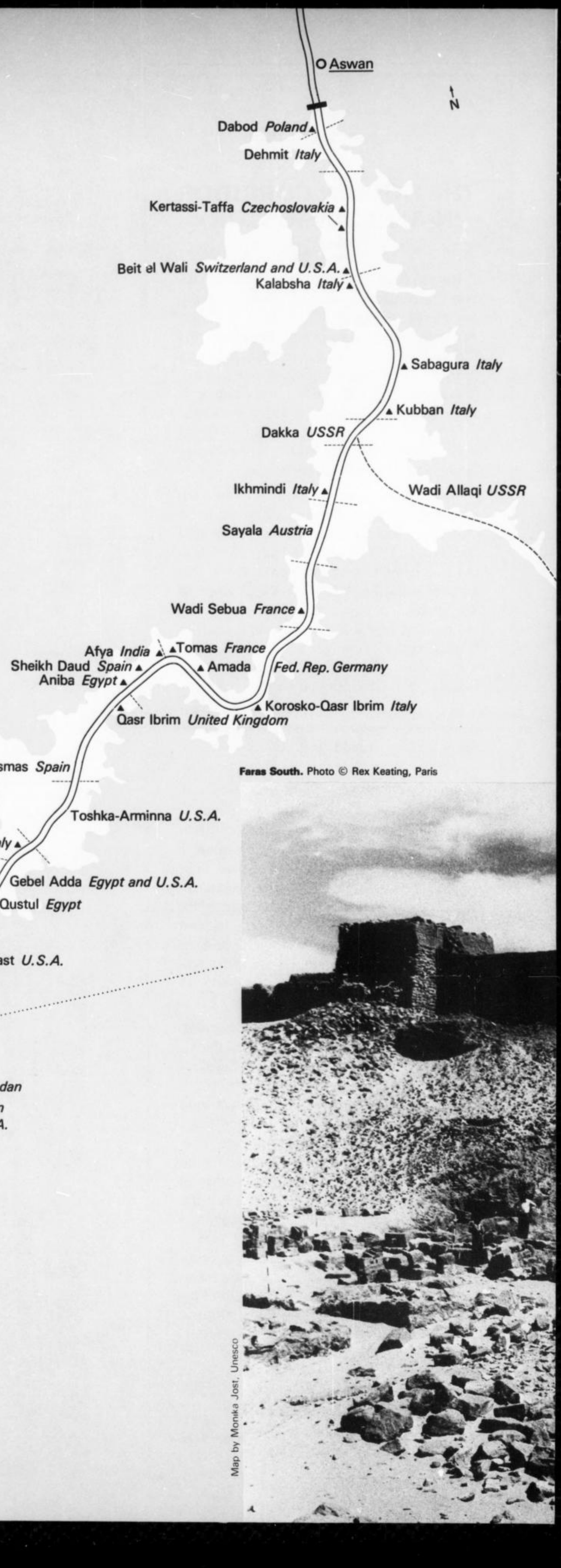
Photo © Friedrich Hinkel, German Democratic Republic. National Museum, Warsaw

A falcon-headed god was worshipped throughout Egypt in prehistoric times, and as Horus, the son of Osiris and his sister-wife Isis, later became part of the Osiris cult. In this Coptic sandstone carving (41 cm high), executed as late as the 5th-7th century AD in Egypt, Horus is shown harpooning Seth, the murderer of Osiris, who has assumed the form of a crocodile.

Photo Chuzeville© Louvre Museum, Paris

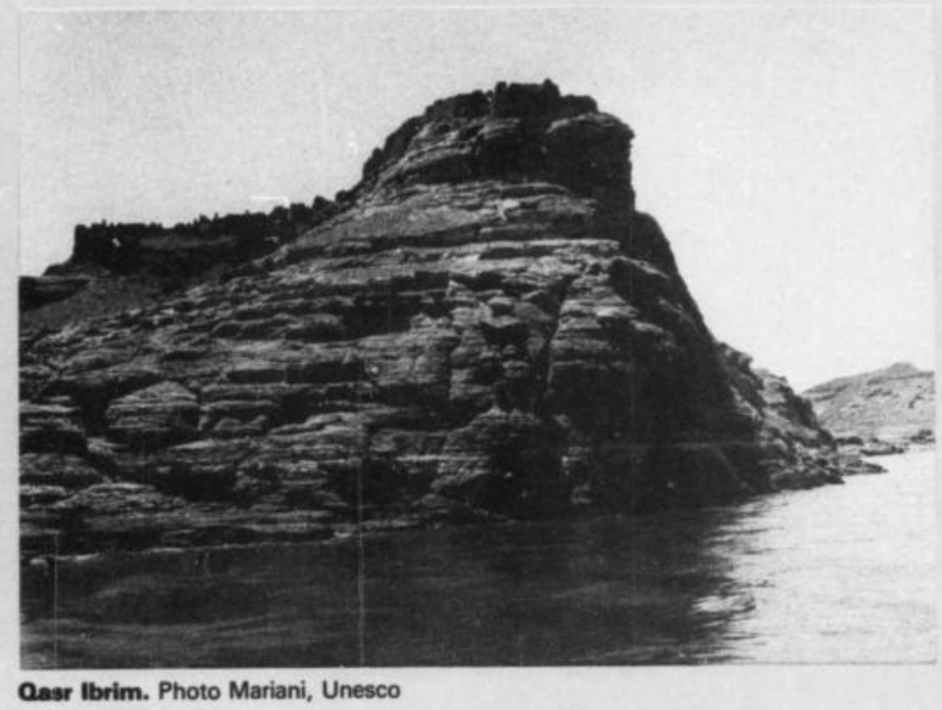
The International Nubian Campaign





Faras South. Photo © Rex Keating, Paris

Map by Monika Jost, Unesco



Qasr Ibrim. Photo Mariani, Unesco

Kom Ombo plain.
Photo © Philip E.L. Smith, Montreal

Kertassi. Photo © The Czechoslovak Institute of Egyptology

Sites excavated

Debeira West. Photo © Rex Keating, Paris

In the twenty years that have elapsed since the day in March 1960 when the Director-General of Unesco launched an appeal for an international campaign to save the monuments and sites of Nubia, the area now covered by the waters of the Nile has been the scene of the greatest archaeological "dig" in history. So rich were the findings that it will be many years before the full historical, cultural and anthropological value of the campaign is comprehensively assessed. On the following pages, the *Unesco Courier* presents a series of excerpts from reports by the various expeditions. For reasons of space these excerpts are necessarily brief and selective. Nevertheless, they afford us a glimpse of the major achievements of the dedicated groups of men and women from many countries who, for two decades and often under difficult conditions, raced against time to save from oblivion a priceless portion of the cultural heritage of Nubia and the world.

Highlights of the archaeological expeditions

Chronological summary

NUBIA	BC	EGYPT
Emergence of "A-Group" culture	3000	**Early Dynastic Period** *(1st and 2nd Dynasties)* Royal burials at Saqqara
	2500	**Old Kingdom** *(3rd to 6th Dynasties)* Great Pyramid at Giza
End of "A-Group" Emergence of "C-Group" culture		**1st Intermediate Period** *(7th to 10th Dynasties)*
The Egyptian fortresses in Nubia	2000	**Middle Kingdom** *(11th to 12th Dynasties)* Amenemhet
		2nd Intermediate Period *(13th to 17th Dynasties)* The Hyksos in Egypt
"C-Group" people culturally absorbed by Egypt	1500	**New Kingdom** *(18th to 20th Dynasties)* Amenophis III Ramses II
	1000	**Late Period** *(21st to 31st Dynasties)* Taharqa (25th "Ethiopian" Dynasty)
The Meroitic Kingdom	500	**Graeco-Roman Period** Alexander the Great and the Ptolemies
		The Romans in Egypt
	AD	
(3rd to 6th centuries) Break up of the Meroitic Kingdom	500	
"X-Group" culture in Nubia		The Arabs in Egypt
The Christian kingdoms of Nubia		
Faras capital of Nobatia	1000	
Installation of Timothy, one of the last Nubian bishops at Qasr Ibrim		

EXPEDITION: UNIVERSITY OF CAIRO

SITE: **ANIBA**

REPORTER: ABD-EL-MONEIM ABU BAKR

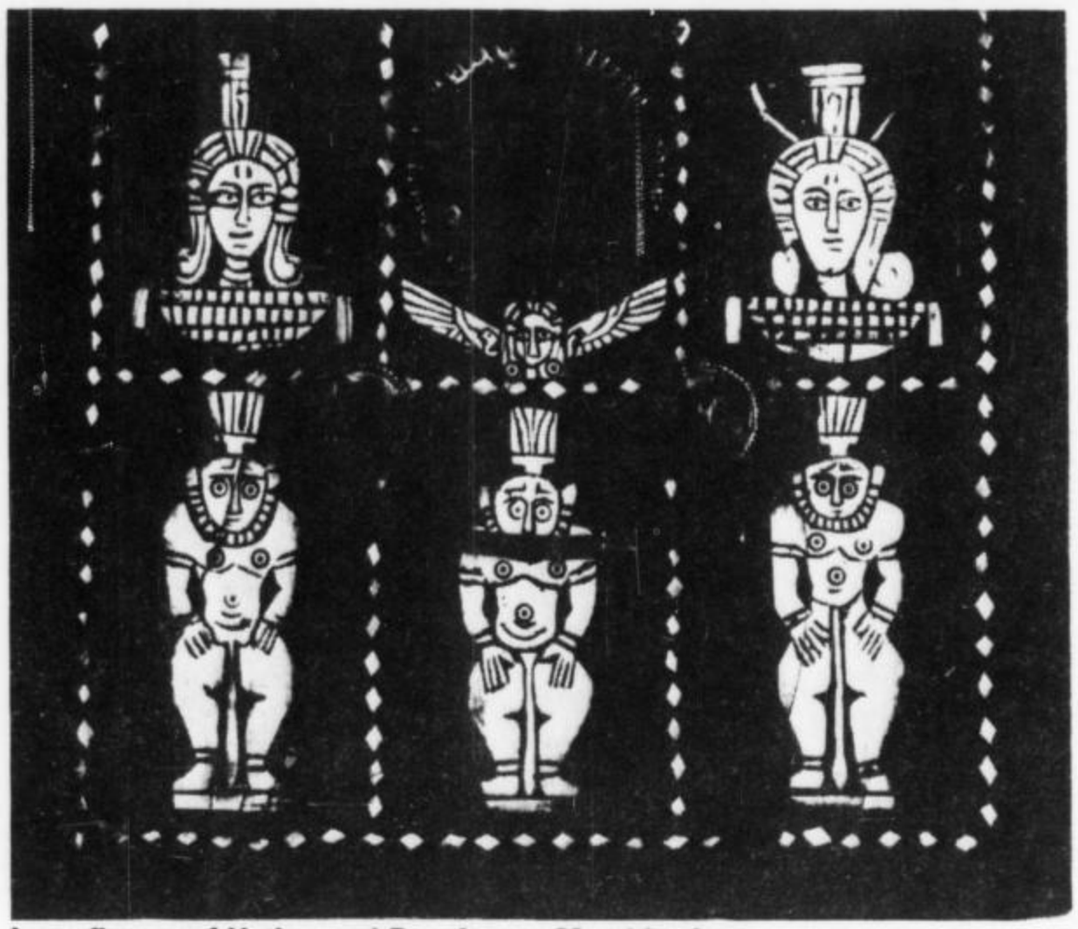
The tomb of Pennut

DURING the 1960-61 and 1961-62 seasons the University of Cairo expedition carried out excavations in the Aniba region. The expedition recorded all the inscriptions in the tomb of Pennut, governor of Miam (the ancient name of the Aniba district) during the reign of Ramses VI, prior to the removal of the tomb and its reconstruction near the new site of the temple of Amada. The expedition also attempted, unfortunately without success, to find the temple of the god Horus which was known to have existed in Miam in ancient times but of which all trace had been lost.

A thousand burials

The expedition also excavated a thirteen-kilometre-long stretch of the west bank of the Nile, on either side of Pennut's tomb, discovering over a thousand tombs in two distinct groupings. The necropolis of Nagaa el-Tahouna consisted of A-Group tombs. The bodies uncovered were surrounded by Kerma type terra-cotta vases, necklaces and scarabs. These findings indicate that the population of Aniba of the period had close links with the Hyksos kings of the Nile Delta. One of the scarabs was inscribed with the name of the Hyksos king Apophis who sought to form an alliance with the Nubians against the threat from the princes of Thebes.

The second group of tombs, situated much closer to Aniba, belongs to the second Meroitic period. The most important find was a chest whose four side surfaces are incrusted with ivory representations of the goddess Hathor and the god Bes. ■

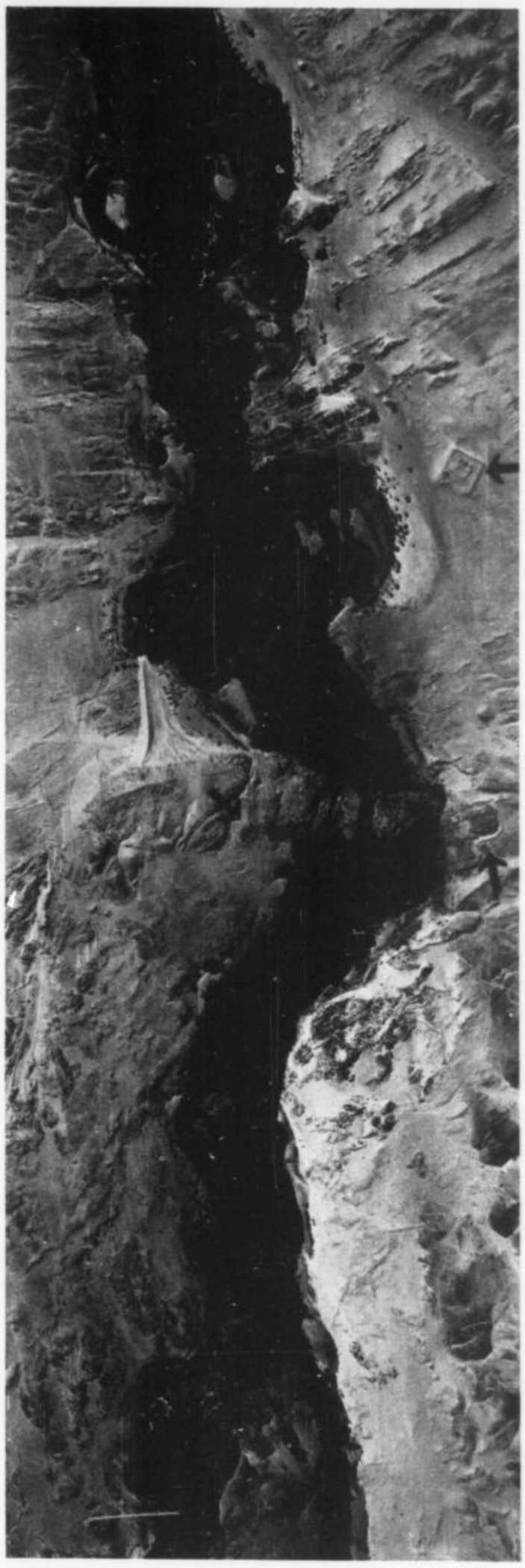


Ivory figures of Hathor and Bes, from a Meroitic chest.
Photo © Egyptian Antiquities Service, Cairo

SUDAN ANTIQUITIES SERVICE
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY
SUPPLEMENTARY EXCAVATIONS

AT the outset of the Nubian campaign the situation in Sudanese Nubia was that there had been no previous surveys which could provide a data base comparable in any way to that available in Egypt.

The Sudan Antiquities Services therefore organized both an aerial and a ground survey of Sudanese Nubia from Faras to Dal. Concessions in the area were offered to foreign expeditions and these were backed up by supplementary excavations by the Sudan Antiquities Service at sites not taken up. The achievement of the surveys was staggering. In 1959, only ten sites in the area had been excavated, but by the time the surveys were completed, in 1969, more than a thousand sites had been identified. The aerial survey offered some unexpected finds, including the natural rock barrier across the Nile at Semna, where traces were discovered of a barrage constructed by Egyptian engineers thirty-nine centuries ago. (See also article page 16). ■



A thirty-nine-century-old barrage.
Photo © Sudan Government Aerial Survey

EXPEDITION: FRENCH INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY

SITES: **WADI ES SEBUA TO SAYALA**

REPORTER: FRANÇOIS DAUMAS

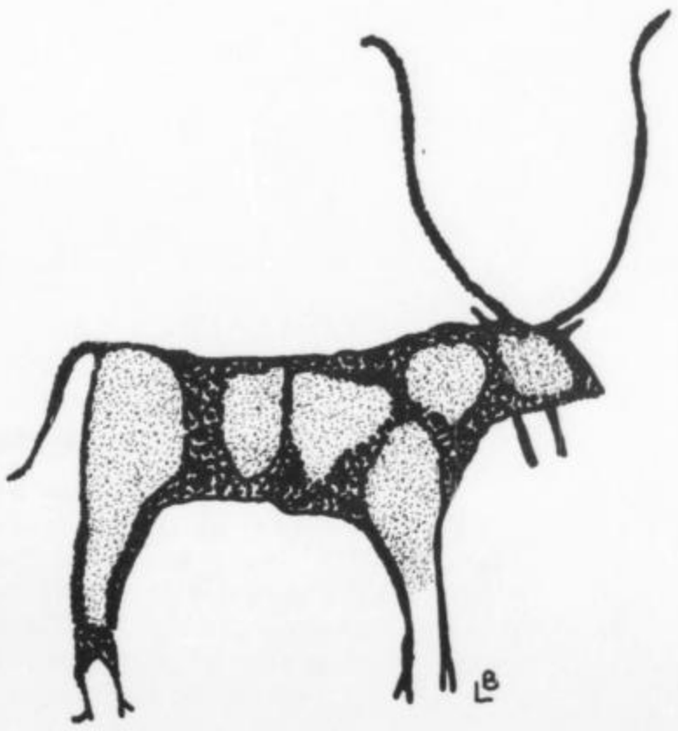
THE temple of Ramses II at Wadi es Sebua was the first site excavated and the approach road, or "dromos", to the temple produced an unusual find. This was a sort of portable bronze stove, discovered in a complex of buildings at the side of the dromos, which bore what seemed to be the emblem of Ramses II.

A strange sacrifice

The expedition also examined a nearby quarry from which blocks of stone for the construction of the temple had been extracted. Near the top of the quarry a cavity was discovered which must have been used as a tomb since it had a carefully carved door. A 19th dynasty plate and a gourd as well as portions of goat's meat, goose and goose eggs had been placed inside. This curious find is thought to be the remains of a sacrifice made to mark the opening of the quarry.

A prehistoric site

Excavation of the temple of Ramses itself revealed that it was built on a site that had been occupied in prehistoric times. In a small valley nearby a number of unusually fine rock carvings of animals were found. It was not possible to date them exactly.



Drawing Lenthéric © F. Daumas, France

Ramses offers a bouquet to St. Peter

A Coptic church had been constructed inside the temple of Ramses and one section of this church presented an astonishing spectacle. The Christian artists had plastered over the Egyptian reliefs and at one spot had painted a representation of St. Peter. Over the years part of the plaster fell away revealing the ancient Egyptian reliefs and we were treated to the sight of Ramses II offering a bouquet to... St. Peter!

Other paintings, such as that of an angel holding in her arms a mummy, which probably represented the soul of a deceased person portrayed at one side, give us a better understanding of Coptic painting.

A C-Group village

On a cliff overlooking the Nile a Nubian C-Group village was discovered dating back to the 18th century BC. It was enclosed with a dry stone wall with a fortified gateway on the more vulnerable east side. Excavation brought to light some Nubian pottery and a number of bone tools and weapons. ■

EXPEDITION: ARCHAEOLOGICAL MISSION OF THE HENRY M. BLACKMER FOUNDATION AND THE CENTRE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES ON THE UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

SITES: **AKASHA REGION**

REPORTER: CHARLES MAYSTRE

THE mission had the good fortune to find a palaeolithic site which yielded a fine selection of stone tools comparable to those of the Levalloisian stone industry. Over 9,000 neolithic artefacts were also found. The tools were of the "Early Khartoum" type and the potsherds showed a variety of decorative styles.

Over two hundred Kerma tombs

Another exciting discovery was that of a cemetery containing more than two hundred tombs dating from the three periods of the so-called "Kerma" civilization (about 2500 to 1500 BC). Although the tombs had been plundered once, considerable finds were made including some fine tulip-shaped, black-bordered, red vases.

A Meroitic vase with ten left eyes

The area appears to have been virtually abandoned during the New Kingdom period, but in the Meroitic era it was occupied again as the many cemeteries of the period attest. These tombs were later emptied and re-used for Christian burials, but a number of Meroitic objects of quality survived, including a fine terracotta vase curiously decorated with a ring of ten left eyes.

Evidence of the Christian era

Four groups of dwellings, three churches, a small fort, the fortified surround of the church of Kageiras and a large number of Christian cemeteries and re-used tombs from earlier eras indicate that the region was comparatively heavily populated during the Christian era (up to 1500 AD). ■

Meroitic vase with ten eyes.
Photo © C. Maystre, Switzerland

EXPEDITION: USSR ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

SITES: **DAKKA REGION, WADI ALLAQI**

REPORTER: BORIS PIOTROVSKY

WORK in the Dakka area involved the exploration of ancient settlements and burial grounds and monuments along the bank of the river. Important collections of palaeolithic tools were made, a large number of predynastic rock carvings were found and Ancient and New Kingdom graves were investigated.

Wadi Allaqi, the golden road

The most interesting phase, however, was the investigation of Wadi Allaqi, one of the largest wadis in Nubia, through which led the road to the ancient gold mines of Nubia. Even before prospecting for gold in Nubia began in the time of the New Kingdom the Pharaohs of the Sixth Dynasty had sent caravans along the Wadi Allaqi in search of stone, ebony, ivory and panther skins. These expeditions are described in detail in a number of inscriptions along the route. We came by chance across an inscription by a "chief of caravan", the Prince Hunes, a noble court official of the Sixth Dynasty whose tomb at Aswan is well known. Even more surprising was the discovery of a short inscription by another famous court official, Uni, who travelled many times to Nubia. Most of the two hundred inscriptions that we discovered, however, date from the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties, at a period when Nubia became the main supplier of gold for Egypt. We now know, for example, that some of the objects found in the tomb of Tutankhamun were made of gold from Nubia.

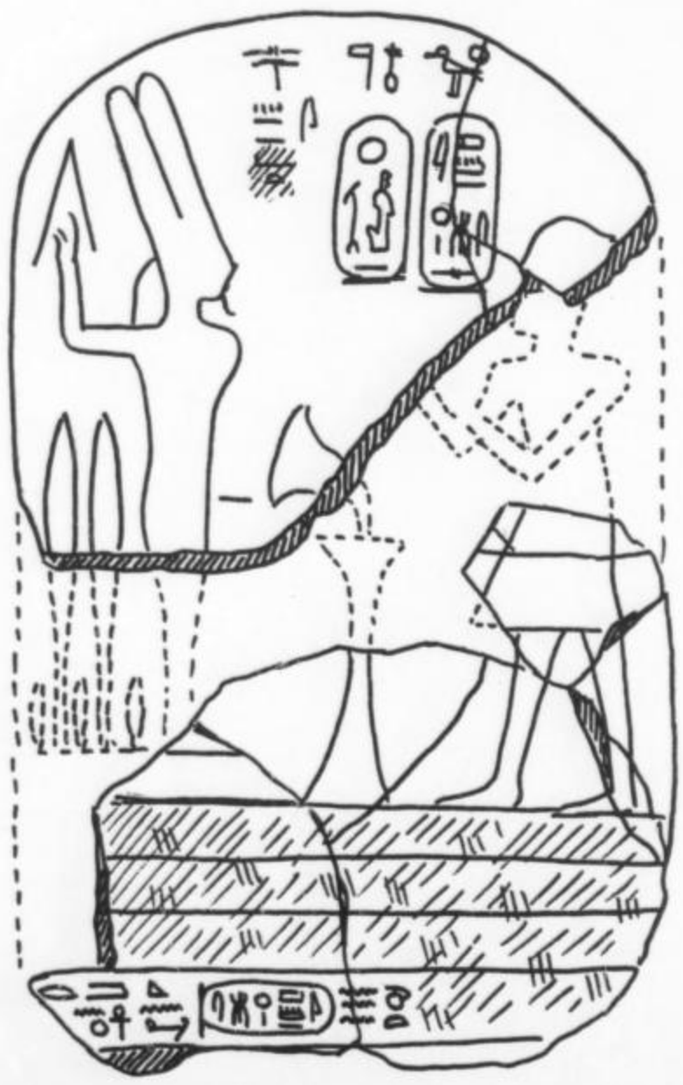
The well of Ramses, the beloved of Amon

One of the major problems facing these caravans was the lack of water along the Wadi. In 1842, in the ruins of an ancient fortress at Kubban, at the mouth of Wadi Allaqi, the French archaeologist Prisse d'Avennes found a large stela depicting Ramses II bringing offerings to the god Horus "of the land of Bak" and to Min "who dwelt in the rocks". The extensive text tells how the Pharaoh was concerned about the lack of water along the road leading to the lands rich in gold.

Although his father had tried in vain to find water, Ramses ordered the governor of the region to pursue the search. At last water was found and a well was dug and named after the Pharaoh. When found by Prisse d'Avennes, however, the lower part of the inscription was broken off precisely at the point at which the name of the well was written: "Ramses, the beloved of Amon, valiant...". For years Egyptologists puzzled over the problem of what the end of the phrase could be and the precise location of the well.

Our expedition, too, was anxious to solve the riddle of the missing text and to locate the well and our hopes were pinned on a site at which many inscriptions had been found and which was known as "Bir-al-Askari", the soldier's well. Indeed, there were signs of excavations there, but our guide assured us that these were the work of British soldiers who had established a military camp there during the last century and had themselves dug in search of water.

On the very last day of our stay at Bir-al-Askari, on the site of the old military camp, we found fragments of stone, bearing hieroglyphs, which when pieced together were found to form a stela depicting Ramses making a sacrifice to the god Min. At first it seemed of little interest as the hieroglyphs were so damaged that they were impossible to decipher. Then we noticed that a single phrase remained undamaged. It read: "The well of Ramses, the beloved of Amon, valiant in life". We had found the stela that marked the position of the well and the part of the inscription missing from the stela found by Prisse d'Avennes at the Kubban fortress. Thus was solved a 120-year-old mystery. ■



Ramses' well, the completed stela.
Drawing © B. Piotrovsky, USSR

EXPEDITION: INDIA

SITES: **AFYA, TOMAS**

REPORTER: B.B. LAL

EXPLORATION of the terraces of the Nile around Afya and Tomas brought to light Middle and Late Stone Age tools. These are believed to be the first Stone Age tools to be discovered in the Afya-Tomas region.

Carbon-dating of the A-Group

The A-Group Culture of Nubia had generally been thought to be contemporary with the late pre-Dynastic and Early Dynastic Cultures of Middle and Upper Egypt, although this was still a matter of debate. The Indian work would appear finally to have settled the issue once and for all since it provided three 14C dates which, after Masca-correction, show a clear range from 3160 BC to 2985 BC.

A link between Nubia and India?

Of no less interest was the "C-Group" cemetery, ascribable broadly to the first half of the second millennium BC. The dead were buried in round-ended oblong pits measuring about 1.5 to 2 metres in length, about 1 metre in width and 1 to 1.5 metres in depth, with the knees drawn up and usually resting on the right side with the head towards the south-east. After burial, a stone-circle often with a tumulus, was raised around the grave. Amongst the objects recovered from the graves were: a quartz dish with kohl-marks, a wooden mirror-handle and a lot of pottery—black, black-and-red, red, and buff wares in a variety of shapes and designs. Particularly pleasing was a bowl with a white-filled incised design depicting a series of hand-in-hand dancers. Certain similarities were detected between these C-Group graves and the megaliths of South India. ■

Colour page right

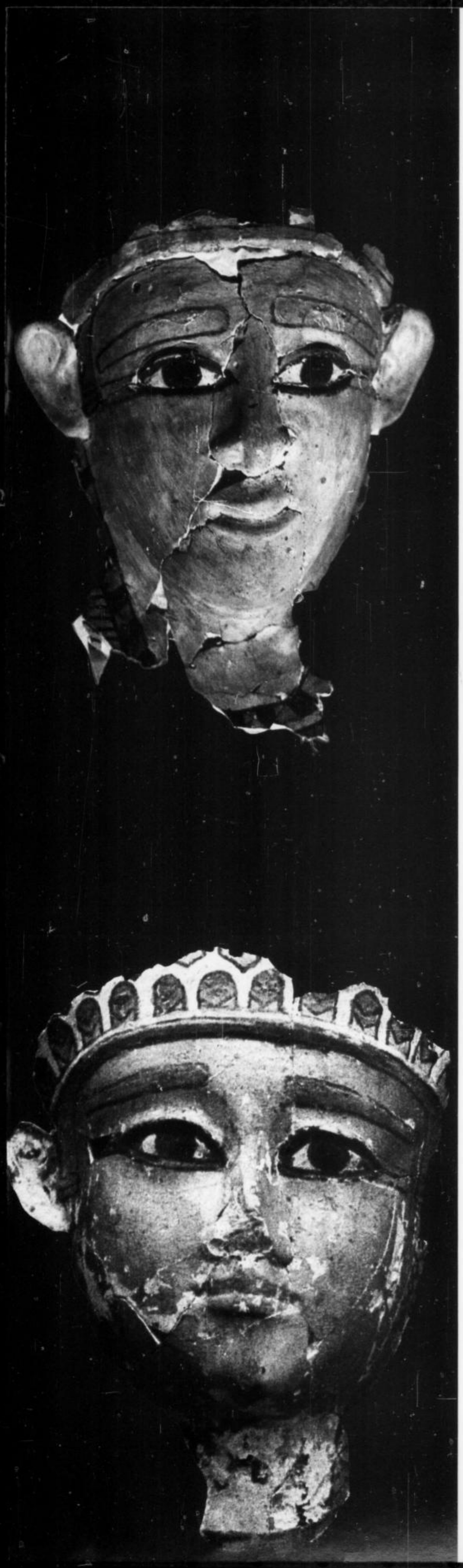
Fragile plaster funerary masks preserve the features of three persons who were buried some 4,000 years ago in Nubia. They have been reconstituted from fragments which the French Archaeological Mission to Sudanese Nubia found in a necropolis near the fortress of Mirgissa on the Second Cataract of the Nile. The painted masks were made from a mould taken when the dead face had been bandaged for mummification.

Photos © André Vila. Franco-Sudanese Archaelogical Mission

Central colour pages

The colossal seated statues of Ramses II in front of the main temple of Abu Simbel overlook the Nile from the new site to which they were removed during the 1960s in a stupendous feat of engineering lasting four and a half years.

Photo © Fred J. Maroon, New York



Colour page

"A landmark in the history of Byzantine art" is how Professor Michalowski, leader of the Polish expedition, describes the gallery of Christian frescoes discovered in the ancient cathedral of Faras, in Sudanese Nubia (see text this page). Far left, the martyr Damienne was the daughter of the governor of a province of the Nile delta and a Christian convert. She was martyred in 284 during Diocletian's persecutions. The fresco dates from the end of the 10th century. Left, the Apostle Peter stands behind the Nubian Coptic bishop Petros, his hands placed protectively on his shoulders. Petros was bishop of Faras from 974 to 999. The painting dates from the same period. Bottom photo, dating from the early 11th century, this fresco depicts Marianos, bishop of Faras from 1000 to 1036, beside the Madonna and Child. All these frescoes are now in the National Museum, Warsaw.

Photo Georg Gerster © Rapho, Paris

Photos © Interpress. National Museum, Warsaw

EXPEDITION: POLISH CENTRE FOR MEDITERRANEAN ARCHAEOLOGY

SITE: **FARAS**

REPORTER: K. MICHALOWSKI

The church under the sand

THE most important contribution of Polish archaeology to the Nubian campaign was incontestably the discovery of Faras in Sudanese Nubia. There, among a whole complex of sacred and profane buildings buried in the sand, under the walls of an Arab citadel, the expedition uncovered an imposing early Christian church the walls of which were decorated with more than 120 frescoes in excellent condition. Today Faras lies some forty metres beneath the waters of the Nile, but in the 7th century it was the capital of northern Nubia. During three years of excavations the Polish expedition succeeded in resuscitating a hitherto unknown chapter of the history of early Christian Nubia and a large portion of its art.

Saint Anne enjoins silence

Among the most famous works discovered are a head of Saint Anne with a finger to her lips in the sign for silence, the Black bishop Petros under the protection of the Apostle Peter, the olive-skinned bishop Marianos, the dark-complexioned Queen-mother Martha, and a vast Nativity scene which includes the shepherds and the Three Wise Men.

It would be impossible to list all the objects such as the splendid 11th century glass chalice found during the excavations which covered not only the great church but also a whole complex of buildings including an eparch's palace, two monasteries and a second church.

A race against time

The excavations at Faras were a race against time. In the course of four seasons, each lasting five to six months, the expedition succeeded in salvaging the most important objects, not only the frescoes of the church, which were taken down and packed in cases, but also the bronzes, the ceramics, the inscriptions and the tombs of the bishops complete with their skeletons. The list of their names which was found on the walls of the church constitutes one of the original documents of Christianity in Nubia. Hardly had the expedition finished nailing up the cases for removal when the water of the Nile reached the level of the hill on which the excavations had taken place. Some months later, the tops of a few palm trees emerging from the waters were all that remained to mark the spot where Faras had once stood. ■

EXPEDITION: THE ARGENTINE EXPEDITION TO NUBIA

SITE: **AKSHA**

REPORTER: A. ROSENWASSER

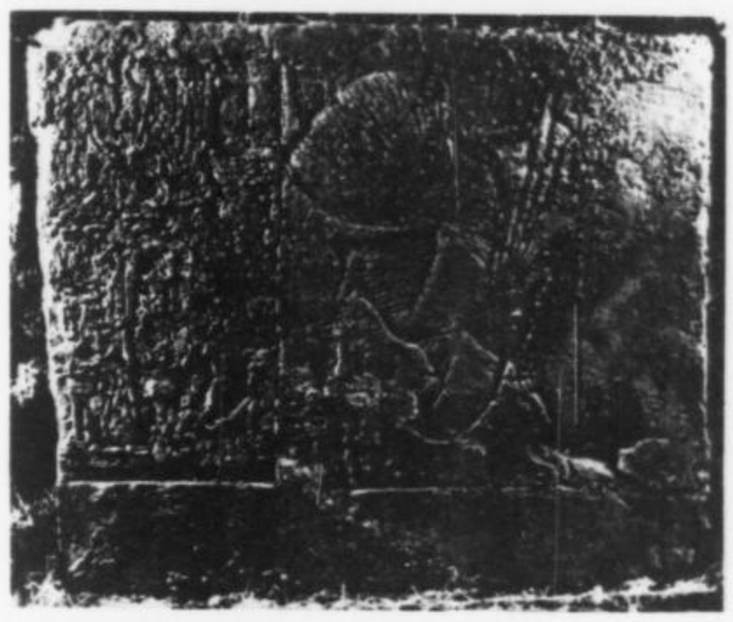
SINCE 1961, Argentina has sent several teams of archaeologists to work in collaboration with French archaeologists in Sudanese Nubia. These teams cleared the temple of Aksha and removed a number of important reliefs which are now in Khartoum.

Royal son of Kush

During the 1962-63 season, the Argentine mission discovered five chapels built by the Pharaoh Seti I, father of Ramses II and part of a door to a chapel dedicated to Heqanakht, who was Nubian viceroy under Ramses II. On the door the viceroy is seen in ceremonial dress with the inscription "Heqanakht, Royal Son of Kush". ■

Saint Anne, Faras
Photo K. Michalowski, National Museum, Warsaw

Removal of fresco at Faras. Photo © Rex Keating, Paris



Heqanakht, Royal Son of Kush, Aksha.
Photo © A. Rosenwasser, Argentina

EXPEDITION: CANADA

SITES: **THE KOM OMBO PLAIN**

REPORTER: PHILIP E. SMITH

The Kom Ombo Plain

THE Canadian Expedition to Nubia chose to do research not in the reservoir area itself but about 50 kilometres downstream from the Aswan High Dam, on the Kom Ombo Plain. This was because the majority of the Egyptian Nubians were shortly to be resettled on reclaimed lands around Kom Ombo, the ground levelling had already begun and prehistoric sites were liable to be destroyed.

In the 1920s a local French engineer, Edmond Vignard, had published several reports on prehistoric sites in the area; as late as 1962 these reports provided virtually all our knowledge of the Upper Palaeolithic period in Egypt. Palaeolithic peoples very likely lived in the area for several hundred thousand years, but little evidence has been preserved in situ until roughly 15000 BC.

Five prehistoric cultures

Vignard had identified a culture he named the Sebilian with a peculiar style of stone tools, and he suspected the presence of others. There were in reality at least five "cultures" (as defined by their stone tools) in existence around Kom Ombo between ca. 15000 and 9000 BC. We were able to salvage some of their campsites, both surface and subsurface and to produce the first radiocarbon dates for the Palaeolithic of Egypt.

Briefly, our reconstruction of human occupation of the Plain is as follows. Around 15000 BC there was a group making flint tools of a type called "Halfan" in Nubia, and apparently grinding some plant foods as well as hunting and fishing. This was followed between 13000 to 12000 by two newly defined and distinct groups: the Silsilian, which emphasized small, even microlithic stone tools, and the Sebekian whose tools were mainly on long, narrow blades. About 11000 BC we find a fourth industry which we called the Menchian which has many heavy flake tools especially scrapers, and a considerable number of sandstone grinding slabs which probably reflect food-preparation activities. Finally, from roughly 11000 BC onward there is Vignard's Sebilian, which seems to have continued into early Holocene times.

The picture we obtain during these six millennia is of small bands of people, probably totalling several hundred at any one time, who frequented the Kom Ombo Plain and adjacent zones during all seasons of the year. They were essentially hunters.

A unique style of rock art

We also recorded a series of rock drawings of wild animals engraved on the cliffs at the northern end of the Plain. These may reflect the activities of local hunters in the millennia before food production reached Egypt after (presumably) 6000 BC. Although their precise age is uncertain the art style seems unique in the Nile Valley.

The results of our research on the Kom Ombo Plain should of course be seen in the context of the revised view of prehistoric life in the Nile Valley of both Egypt and the Sudan that has become accepted in the past twenty years. The Valley is now known to have been in late Palaeolithic times not a thinly-inhabited, isolated and impoverished culture area but one where many different groups of people lived and interacted in what at the time was one of the world's most congenial environments.

The reconstruction we have been able to make can be seen as a microcosm of how many similar pre-agricultural peoples must have lived in Nubia and Upper and Lower Egypt at this time and an illustration of how they adapted themselves to the peculiar conditions of the Nilotic environment and its adjacent hills and desert fringes. ■

Liturgical text fragment, Sunnarti.
Photo © E. Dinkler, Heidelberg

EXPEDITION: GERMAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

SITES: **KULB, ISLANDS OF SUNNARTI, TURMUKI AND TANGUR**

REPORTER: ERICH DINKLER

THE Institute carried out excavations on the three islands of the Batn el Haggar, between the Second Cataract and Akasha, as well as at Kulb, some three kilometres to the west of Akasha on the west bank of the Nile.

Three village churches

Three churches were excavated, each of which at one time served a small village and could hold no more than twenty to twenty-five people. The best preserved church was that found on the island of Sunnarti. The altar was still standing with its marble top. The central part of the church was dominated by the pulpit. On the west side were separate entrances for men and women. This church dated from the 12th or 13th century.

Three fortified settlements were also excavated and once again the most impressive fortifications were those on Sunnarti. Constructed in the form of a triangle in natural stone, they were adapted to the topography of the ground and enclosed a group of some fifteen dwellings and enough open space for some cattle.

The fortified village of Kulb

The fortified village of Kulb was particularly interesting and dates probably from the 8th century. The encircling wall, however, is probably of later construction. In many of the dwellings fragments of objects marked with the name Michael or with monograms representing this name, all in Greek lettering, were found. These fragments had holes pierced through them, presumably so that they could be hung on the walls. In view of the large number of such graffiti found it would seem that the inhabitants of the village knew the Greek alphabet.

The oldest liturgical text

Perhaps the most important find of all was that of a small piece of parchment lying in the sand on the floor of the church of Sunnarti. It contained the oldest liturgical text of the Nubian Church so far known. On one side was carefully written out, in red and black ink, the text of a Greek eucharistic prayer. ■

EXPEDITIONS: UNIVERSITY OF TURIN
UNIVERSITY OF MILAN
UNIVERSITY OF ROME

SITES: **DEHMIT, KALABSHA, IKHMINDI, MAHARRAQA, KUBBAN, SABAGURA, TAMIT, SONQI**

REPORTER: SERGIO DONADONI

THE Italian contribution to the Nubian campaign was a three-pronged effort: the University of Turin investigated sites at Dehmit and Kalabsha, the University of Milan at Ikhmindi, Maharraqa, Kubban and Sabagura, and the University of Rome at Tamit and Sonqi.

An ensemble of local cultures

Research was concerned less with Egyptian antiquities on Nubian soil (although this was an aspect of the work at Dehmit and Kubban) than with remains and vestiges that enabled typical local cultures to be identified. These were often ensembles of cultures that had no writing and could speak to us only through their artefacts. In a cemetery at Tamit, for example, we came across vestiges of the oldest period, contemporary with the Egyptian predynastic and early dynastic period; and the rock drawings and pottery found at Sabagura and Kubban tell us of the pastoral populations of the Middle Kingdom period.

An independent Nubia

But the most successful research was perhaps that relating to a later period. The identification at Maharraqa of a Meroitic necropolis, right on the frontier between the Roman world and the territories of the Nubian kings whose capital was in far distant Meroe, indicates how far to the north this African culture imposed the stamp of its personality.

At Ikhmindi we had the good fortune to discover an inscription which was virtually contemporary with the introduction of Christianity into the region on the basis of which it was possible to identify a certain form of Christian urbanism at Ikhmindi, Sabagura and Kalabsha.

We found other important Christian monuments dating from the zenith of independent Nubia, when for the first time inscriptions were written in the language of the country rather than in the languages of neighbouring countries: a sanctuary complex at Tamit and a small cemetery church at Sonqi have provided a series of paintings, inscriptions and other evidence of a social and cultural life linked with and just as richly varied as that of the nearby metropolis of Faras. ■

Sudanese workers at Argin
Photo © M. Llongueras-Campana

EXPEDITION: INSTITUTE FOR EGYPTOLOGY OF HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY, EAST BERLIN, GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

SITES: **FARAS TO DAL (WEST BANK), 2nd CATARACT TO DAL (EAST BANK)**

REPORTER: FRITZ HINTZE

600 rock inscriptions and 750 groups of rock drawings

TWO working groups from the expedition undertook the huge task of collecting all the rock inscriptions and rock drawings in Sudanese Nubia from the Second Cataract to Dal, on the east bank of the Nile, and from Faras to Dal, on the west bank, excluding, of course, those on the concessions of other expeditions.

All the drawings and inscriptions discovered were copied and photographed and latex squeezes were made of the more important ones. For this purpose a new technique of coloured latex squeezes was developed. Work continued over three seasons and the material collected and documented included almost 600 rock inscriptions and over 100 rock picture sites with 750 groups of pictures.

The distribution of the rock inscriptions is significant. North of Semna, which was once the southern boundary of the Middle Kingdom of ancient Egypt, most of the inscriptions date from the Middle Kingdom period; but south of Semna all the inscriptions, with the exception of three Old Kingdom inscriptions from a site near the Dal Cataract, are from the New Kingdom period. The three exceptions are the most southerly Old Kingdom rock inscriptions discovered *in situ* up to now. They were made by scribes and overseers of prospectors searching for minerals and gold in the mountains. The expedition also recorded the famous Nile level marks at Semna and Kumma.

The rock drawings cover the time span from prehistory to the Middle Ages of our era. Approximately ten per cent are pictures of wild animals such as elephants, giraffes, antelopes, gazelles and ostriches. Sixty per cent show domestic animals and the majority of these are cattle, but horses, camels, sheep, goats and dogs are also depicted; the remaining thirty per cent portray varied scenes such as men hunting, riding horses or camels, women dancing, and boats. There are many symbolic signs whose meaning is not easy to determine. ■

The stela of Prince Amenemhet.
Photo © T. Säve-Söderbergh, Uppsala

EXPEDITION: SCANDINAVIAN JOINT EXPEDITION TO SUDANESE NUBIA

SITES: **EAST BANK OF THE NILE FROM FARAS TO GEMAI**

REPORTER: TORGNY SÄVE-SÖDERBERG

THE expedition, a joint effort of the four Scandinavian countries, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, worked in the northernmost part of the Sudan during the four winters of 1961-1964 and made a complete archaeological investigation of the east bank of the Nile from Faras on the Egyptian border to Gemai in the region of the 2nd Cataract, a distance of some sixty kilometres. The number of registered sites totalled about 490 and they represented the whole development from the earliest Stone Age to the Middle Ages. Practically all these sites were previously unknown. Some 4,200 tombs were excavated, five churches and some fortified areas. Approximately 2,600 rock drawings were photographed, mapped in detail and documented. The expedition recovered some 3,000 more or less complete New Kingdom vessels, 6,000 fragments of textiles and osteological material from 1,500 individuals.

The stela of prince Amenemhet

A rich cemetery of 692 tombs was found at Fadrus in the district of Debeira. The assumption that these tombs belonged to Egyptianized Nubians is supported by the fact that nearby is the tomb of Djehuti-hotep, Prince of Teh-khet (Debeira) who also had the Nubian name of Paitsy. From his titles it is clear that Djehuti-hotep had been educated at the Egyptian court.

The expedition excavated the tomb of his brother Amenemhet which lay on the west bank of the Nile. Amenemhet was first an official in the Egyptian administration and then succeeded his brother as Prince of Teh-khet. In the cult chamber of his tomb the expedition found a magnificent stela with a long hieroglyphic text and pictures of Amenemhet, his wife and his parents.

Human remains

A large collection of skeletal remains, representing 1,546 individuals, ranging in date from the A-Group to the end of the Christian period (1500 AD), was submitted to computer analysis. The age distribution shows that the Nubian population as a rule died at an early age. In the A-Group and the X-Group mortality frequency is highest in the 20 to 25 age group, while in the other groups it is highest in the 35 to 50 age group. An analysis of various anthropometric and non-metric data seems to indicate that a change of population took place in the Late Nubian period in the transition from the Meroitic culture to the X-Group culture. The immigrating X-Group was not exceedingly different from the Meroitic series but had distinct differences from the earlier C-Group. ■

EXPEDITION: THE EGYPT EXPLORATION SOCIETY OF LONDON

SITE: **QASR IBRIM**

REPORTERS: J.M. PLUMLEY AND R.D. ANDERSON

The fortress site of Qasr Ibrim

THE project that proved rewarding beyond all expectations was the excavation of the fortress hill site of Qasr Ibrim. Excavations have shown that the site has a long history of human occupation, reaching back at least to the early New Kingdom, if not earlier, and continuing in almost unbroken sequence until 1812 AD, when the place was finally abandoned. Since the rising of the waters of the lake the site has become an island, and sufficient areas remain to warrant further excavations.

The fortifications that were once so impressive a feature of the site have been rebuilt many times. The date of the mud-brick bastion, discovered in 1978, is not yet known, but the earliest continuous girdle wall may well have been built in Meroitic or Ptolemaic times, and was rebuilt and strengthened probably by the Roman governor Petronius in about 22 BC.

The temple of Taharqa

The finding of a considerable number of blocks containing the titles of Taharqa, a Pharaoh of the "Ethiopian" Dynasty (7th century BC), suggested that a building from his period had once existed at Ibrim, and during the 1972 season considerable remains of a temple erected by Taharqa were uncovered. Of special interest was the finding of a wall painting containing the face of Taharqa, the only example of a portrait of Taharqa in this form yet known.

A tavern in the (X-Group) town

Excavations in the fortress area revealed a large X-Group town built over earlier Meroitic structures. It is possible that Ibrim may have been a royal residence and the artefacts of the period reveal a hitherto unsuspected degree of cultural achievement.

The largest secular building in use during the X-Group period at Ibrim appears to have been a tavern. It was originally built about the middle of the 4th century AD, in late Meroitic times. Carvings on the outside, showing an amphora resting on a tripod and a bunch of grapes, suggest the purpose of the building. This was confirmed by the discovery in adjoining rooms of broken wine jars and goblets by the thousand.

The cathedral of the Virgin Mary

Qasr Ibrim is dominated by the remains of a splendid, stone-built cathedral, itself a rebuilding of an earlier structure. The arcades of the cathedral are decorated with carved stone rosettes and other motifs. A double-aisled building with monolithic granite columns, a semicircular apse to the east and two deep crypts with tomb shafts, it was approached by a magnificent flight of ornamental steps.

The Nubian bishop Timothy

In 1964 the burial of a bishop was found under the entrance to the north crypt of the cathedral. Commissary letters in the form of two scrolls four and a half metres long, from the Patriarch of the Coptic Church, found in the grave, reveal that his name was Timothy, that he was Nubian and that

The body of Bishop Timothy, showing the two commissary letters found in his grave.
Photo © J.M. Plumley, U.K.

he was consecrated bishop in 1372 AD. It was at one time thought that Timothy was the last bishop of Nubia, but that this was not the case was proved by one of nine leather scrolls found at Ibrim in 1964. Written in medieval Nubian and dated 1464, the scroll indicates that a Nubian king, Joel, was then reigning at Gebel Adda and that a bishop Merki was resident at Ibrim.

The *baqt*

The undisturbed nature of the site and its dryness meant that discarded material was often wonderfully preserved. In 1972 a magnificent Arabic scroll was found which dealt with the functioning of the *baqt* or treaty between Christian Nubia and Moslem Egypt. In the past some scholars believed the whole question of the *baqt* to have been an invention of later Arabic writers. The scroll puts its historical reality beyond all doubt. In it the governor of Egypt writes in the autumn of 758 AD to the king of Nubia complaining that the terms of the treaty were not being adhered to. Runaway slaves from Egypt were not being returned, Moslem merchants were not being granted safe passage in Nubia, messengers were being unnecessarily detained.

Cornelius Gallus the governor-poet

The most exciting find of the 1978 season was a papyrus containing ten lines, some very fragmentary, of elegiac verse by Cornelius Gallus, the first governor of Roman Egypt, known to the ancient world as the captor of Cleopatra, friend of Virgil and a passionate poet later admired by Ovid. Before the Ibrim discovery the modern world knew only one pentameter by Gallus. The text is written in small formal book hand and is probably the nearest we yet have to a contemporary copy of a well known Latin poet.

Clues to two unknown languages

At the core of Ibrim's fascination lie the two largely unknown languages which may in time be interpreted through discoveries made there in successive seasons. The earlier is Meroitic, the language of the southern city that dominated Ibrim for much of its history, and of which the script is derived from Egyptian demotic signs. Words can be read but their meaning is largely elusive. The wooden tablets and potsherds turned up at Ibrim will assist the task of decipherment. The other language imperfectly known is medieval Nubian, apparently already written down for the first time towards the end of the 8th century AD. To add to the extensive finds of literary and non-literary documents, the last season at Ibrim produced five bilingual psalms written in Greek and Nubian which are now being carefully studied. ■

Rock drawing from Sayala.
Photo © Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

EXPEDITION: AUSTRIAN EXPEDITION IN NUBIA

SITES: **SAYALA REGION**

REPORTER: WILHELM ENGARTNER

THE task allotted to the Austrian expedition included the exploration of tombs and the collection and scientific study of skeletons found, and the recording of rock engravings and paintings. The area investigated covered the whole district of Sayala on both banks of the Nile.

Ships of all ages

Along with a large number of rock drawings of cattle, giraffes, elephants, ostriches and human beings, 140 representations of ships were found. Dating and classification were aided by examination of the type of construction depicted. They included representations of Nagada II type ships, ships of the dynastic periods, with cabins amidships, Roman ships with high freeboards, multi-oared vessels of later times as well as more recent feluccas.

History from bones

Modern physical anthropology goes beyond the measurement of such indicators as skull size or body height. It attempts the more ambitious task of reconstructing the entire biological structure of a population or a segment of a population. This includes such factors as the proportion of sexes, infantile mortality, the process of child growth, overall life duration.

The expedition examined a total of 107 human skeletons; 30 were from the late C-Group, 13 from the Roman-Nubian period and 64 from the early Byzantine period. Among the C-Group skeletons not a single woman was found and of the children most were in the 1 to 6 age group. Where were the women buried? And why did some of the children receive the same burial distinctions as grown men? Several males were found to have unusually large teeth. Among the Byzantine period skeletons a surprisingly large number were found to have lost their teeth at a comparatively early age (25 to 35). Children and juveniles, however, appeared to have been unaffected. What can have brought on this sudden change at the age of maturity? These are some of the questions which remain to be solved. ■

EXPEDITION: INSTITUTE OF EGYPTOLOGY OF PRAGUE UNIVERSITY

SITES: **TAFFA, KERTASSI, WADI QITNA, SOUTH KALABSHA**

REPORTER: MIROSLAV VERNER

The lost temple of Taffa

ONE of the most exciting achievements of the expedition was the finding of the lost Southern Temple, in the Taffa area. Built in the Roman period and re-used later by Christians, this temple was still known at the beginning of the last century, but by our times no trace of it was to be seen. The temple was located somewhere on a plain one kilometre long and half a kilometre wide and covered with five metres of mud brought down by the Nile after the construction of the first Aswan Dam.

By studying two daguerreotypes made in 1850-1851 by two French travellers, Maxime du Camp and Félix Teynard, the team succeeded in calculating the photographer's position from the perspective of the cliff behind the temple and thus established its exact location.

The fortress of Kertassi

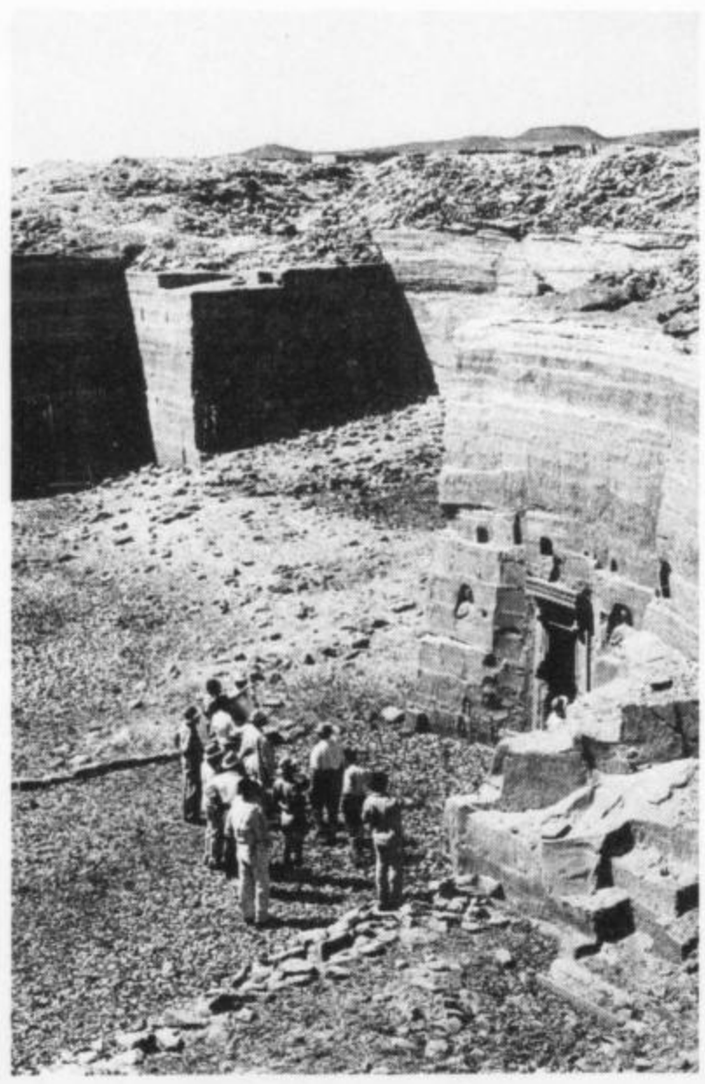
Simultaneously with the excavations at Taffa work was going ahead with the mapping out of a large ancient fortress at Kertassi. Nearby was the huge Kertassi quarry which at one time provided stone for the temples of Philae. It is carved in the form of a vast amphitheatre. A niche, flanked by two half statues, carved on part of the quarry face gives the quarry the appearance of an ancient ruined temple.

550 X-Group graves

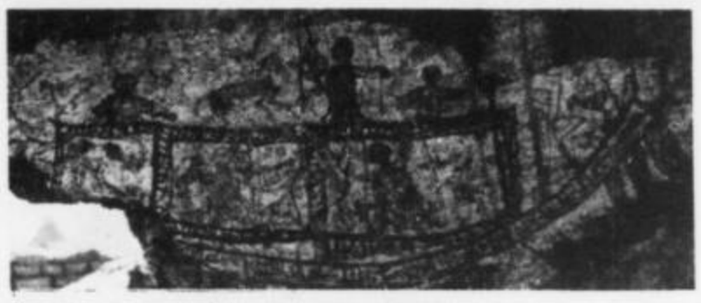
Excavations at Wadi Qitna and south Kalabsha led to the discovery of some 550 X-Group graves of the 4th and 5th centuries. The rich funeral trappings included collections of pottery, glass, metal objects, jewellery, fragments of wooden cots, remnants of food and abundant anthropological material.

Epigraphic research

In two fifty-kilometre-long areas stretching from Naga el Dom el Dakar to Naga el Qurud and from Naga el Birba to Gerf Hussein the expedition carried out epigraphic research which yielded some 240 Egyptian, Meroitic, Carian, Aramaic, Greek, Latin and Coptic inscriptions. ■



The quarry at Kertassi. Photo Mariani, Unesco



Noah's Ark fresco, Debeira West.
Photo © Rex Keating

EXPEDITION: UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

SITE: **DEBEIRA WEST**

REPORTER: PETER SHINNIE

Domestic life in medieval Nubia

THE investigation of the medieval town Debeira, on the west bank of the Nile between the modern villages of Serra and Argin, was deliberately planned to get the maximum amount of information on domestic aspects of medieval Nubian life. The objects found and the nature of some of the buildings, were more elaborate than had been anticipated and Debeira was shown to be something more than just a settlement of poor peasants.

It consisted not only of the main town, but also of two churches, and a monastery(?). The main town was occupied at two quite separate periods, the first dating to the seventh century AD and the second from c. 750 AD to c. 1100 AD. Between these two periods the site was abandoned and was covered with wind-blown sand. The churches are associated with the main, richer, second period of occupation, whilst the monastery appears to have been occupied at the same time as the first town, that is in the sixth century or even somewhat earlier.

The early settlement

The early (seventh century AD) settlement had been largely built over by the later town but a few dwellings had not been built over. These buildings, of light construction, appear to be storage rooms and kitchens, perhaps part of a more elaborate structure underlying later buildings further south.

Nubian houses of the second period

The second period of occupation was more intense. Most of the buildings appear to have been dwellings, and though none of them are identical it is possible to see regularity in the pattern of Nubian houses of the period. They are small, frequently of two rooms, roofed with the Nubian vault and sometimes with a staircase leading to the roof. All the buildings are of mud brick with the exception of a unique stone house in the southern extension of the site. It seems that this area represents the latest occupation in the town and the stone house is probably to be dated to somewhere about AD 1100.

An age-old way of life

Domestic life probably did not differ very much from the life of the recent past. One of the main differences is to be seen in the lay-out of the villages—over at least the last 150 years the Nubian village has consisted of large courtyard houses, standing free, and arranged in a line facing the river. The medieval village was quite different; the houses were very much smaller, they were packed tightly together, and there was apparently no logical arrangement.

Agriculture and diet

Agriculture must have been much the same as today, with a dependence on the *saqia* wheel for irrigation. Debeira produced one structure which may have been part of a sesame oil press. Crops can be assumed to have been much the same as today, wheat and sorghum, and diet cannot have been very different. ■

EXPEDITION: THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, U.S.A.

SITES: **BEIT EL WALI TO KALABSHA**

REPORTER: BRUCE WILLIAMS

The tombs of the Blemmye chieftains

FIELD operations began in 1960-61 when a joint expedition with the Schweizerisches Institut für Bauforschung und Altertumskunde conducted an expedition just south of Aswan to record the partly rock-cut temple of Beit el Wali constructed by Ramses II of the Nineteenth Dynasty and excavate sites between there and Bab Kalabsha.

Most interesting was the excavation of several sites with pottery and objects of a previously unknown and distinctive material culture, especially large circular stone tombs that contained a beautiful red-burnished pottery decorated with linear designs along with objects and coins of late Roman times. It is now believed that these were tombs of kinglets or chieftains of the so-called Blemmyes, a powerful tribe known to have occupied this part of Nubia in the dying days of the Roman Empire. The new objects and pottery of these tombs appear to give a cultural substance to the Blemmyes, a people well known in classical sources but hitherto unknown in archaeology.

The largest A-Group tombs ever found

In January of 1964, members of the expedition working at Qustul, just north of the Sudan frontier discovered a cemetery of A-Group tombs of far greater size than ever before found in Nubia. Although the tombs had been plundered and burnt, the fragments of pottery and objects are so numerous, varied and of such high quality, including some that are entirely unique, that had these tombs been found in a Predynastic cemetery north of the First Cataract or had they been of much later date, they would have been considered royal at once.

The Qustul incense burner.
Photo © Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago

The testimony of an incense burner

However, there was additional evidence of Egyptian-type kingship in the specific symbols and regalia. Previously, contemporary evidence of kings in Egypt extended back only two or three generations before the start of the First Dynasty about 3100 BC and a number of palace façades incised on pottery extended our knowledge a generation or two further. This evidence has been combined with later lists, annals, and legends to make a speculative reconstruction of prehistoric Egypt. Never before, however, had actual clear remains of kings been found that corresponded to these disconnected fragments.

In the tombs of Cemetery L at Qustul were found two groups of evidence that confirm their royal character and offer new clues to connect many of these previously disconnected fragments. The first group is a number of decorated incense burners, cylindrical objects of sandstone or a curious mixture of clay minerals that were sometimes carved with representations. Mostly these were incised, but one, the Qustul Incense Burner, a particularly large example, was elaborately carved in a sunk decoration related to rock drawing in the Nile Valley and adjacent deserts.

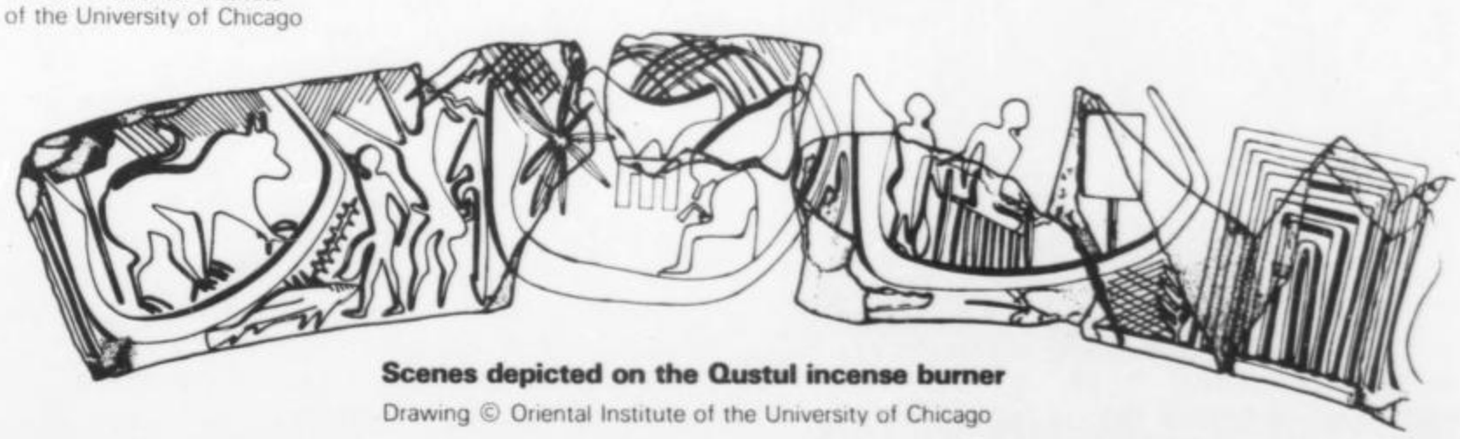
The piece had been seriously damaged by those who destroyed the tombs and, though a procession of three ships ending at a palace façade could easily be seen, two of the three main passengers on the ships had been badly damaged. However, when the piece was reexamined in the light of the obviously royal character of the cemetery, the restoration was immediately clear. The first ship was taking a bound prisoner and his guard to the sacrifice before the palace façade. In the second ship was a king, shown by the White Crown of Upper Egypt and the Horus falcon, almost certainly on a *serekh* or palace façade; the king seated on a block throne with a falcon perched on a palace façade that contains his name in front of him is a typical representation in Early Dynastic Egypt.

The earliest recorded historical event

The second group of materials to give a historical substance to the kings who had been buried in Cemetery L is a series of painted pottery vessels that show actual or claimed events. On one piece, a bird attacks an oval that contains two diagonal strokes, the symbol for Hierakonpolis, most venerated of the ancient capitals of Upper Egypt. This reference to a conflict is in fact the earliest mention of this city, the earliest reference to a political entity in Egypt and very probably the earliest recorded historical event.

The most important of these vessels is a bowl, originally with four groups of giraffes flanking palm trees. Only two scenes have survived in one of which can be seen a plant, which, though somewhat oddly shaped, is clearly the symbol for Upper Egypt. Again this is the first mention of Upper Egypt as a political entity.

This new material will help define the date of the few monumental objects from Egypt that refer to events in this "prehistoric" age and they will also help, along with the Qustul Incense Burner, to identify other objects and a monument already known in Nubia as belonging to the Pharaohs that first led Nubia to political unity and cultural distinction. ■



Scenes depicted on the Qustul incense burner
Drawing © Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago

A-Group Nubia a unified state

The evidence derived from Cemetery L makes the period just before the First Dynasty accessible as a historic age for the first time. One point stands out, completely unexpected, completely contrary to previous thought or opinion. For nine generations or more, between 3500/3400 and 3200/3100 BC, A-Group Nubia was a unified State, with the full equipment of civilization, a government, a Pharaoh, officials, State cult, writing and monuments, a State which succeeded in uniting people who were not blood relations for a common purpose. Thus the inhabitants of Ta-Seti, the "Land of the Bow" as Nubia was called by the ancient Egyptians, participated fully and more equally than anyone has ever supposed in the fateful achievement of civilization on the Nile. ■

EXPEDITION: UNIVERSITY OF STRASBOURG

SITE: **TOMAS**

REPORTER: JEAN LECLANT

A number of Old Kingdom inscriptions found by the expedition indicate that Tomas was an important trading centre of ancient Nubia and a departure point for routes leading to various oases and the desert route to Aswan. A careful survey of the river bank on either side of Tomas revealed a hitherto unsuspected abundance of north Saharan rock art.

The stela of Bertoye

During the late Meroitic period Tomas and the district around it formed part of one of the frontier provinces of the Meroitic kingdom. At the site of Karanog just upstream from Tomas, the expedition discovered two extremely important texts, one on a stela and the other on an offertory table. Both were written in cursive Meroitic script and both mentioned the name of Bertoye, a high official and priest of several religious cults of the region and in particular of Amon. Bertoye figures in several other inscriptions in Meroitic, demotic and also Greek, some of which are dated between 253 and 260 AD. He was therefore a contemporary of the Meroitic king Tequerideamani. The two texts from Karanog will be of great importance in the studies of the Meroitic language now being carried out (see inside back cover). Previously only 800 Meroitic inscriptions, many of them short, were available. The discovery of two exceptionally well-preserved, long texts will be of great value to the computer-aided study of the Meroitic language.

The stela of Bertoye.
Photo © J. Leclant, France

Tomas during the Christian era

When Nubia was converted to Christianity, Tomas retained its importance. At Sheikh Daud the expedition recorded several graffiti from the Coptic era and excavated a tomb in which were found the remains of four burials and a fragment of pink sandstone cut in the shape of a camel. ■

EXPEDITION: PENNSYLVANIA-YALE EXPEDITION, U.S.A.

SITES: **TOSHKA, ARMINNA**

REPORTER: WILLIAM KELLY SIMPSON

The prince of Miam

ONE of the more interesting of the expeditions' achievements during the Nubian campaign was the identification by the Pennyslvania-Yale Expedition of one of three tombs at Toshka East, just north of Abu Simbel, as the tomb of Heka-nefer, prince of Miam (Miam being the ancient name of a district of Nubia).

As early as 1905, Arthur Weigall, then Chief Inspector for the Antiquities Service, had found an inscription near the tomb which he translated as reading "chieftain of Miam, prince (heka) of Nefer", not realizing that the last part of the inscription was a proper name and that the translation should have been "the chieftain of Miam, Heka-nefer". Now, far to the north at Thebes, in Egypt proper, a prince of Miam named Heka-nefer is represented in the tomb of Huy, the Viceroy of Nubia under King Tutankhamun (about 1352-1343 BC). Tutankhamun, Huy and Heka-nefer are all represented on the same wall of the tomb, with the latter being shown in a procession of tribute from the southlands. Of the figures represented Heka-nefer alone is singled out by name.

Although later investigators made the connexion between the Heka-nefers of the Toshka inscription and of the Theban tomb, realizing that they were the same individual, they failed to recognize that the tomb at Toshka was that of the same Heka-nefer. This is not so surprising as it might at first seem, since there is a striking contrast between his representation at Thebes, where he is shown as a typical Nubian with dark skin and southern costume, and the impression made by the tomb at Toshka, modelled on the Theban tombs, from which one would surmise that he was an Egyptian official.

Child of the nursery

Not only did the expedition locate the inscription concerning Heka-nefer described by Weigall, it also discovered four other previously unknown inscriptions some distance to the south of the tombs. One of these indicates that Heka-nefer was the chief river transport agent, with control over all river traffic in his principality. Three other titles give a good indication of his relation to the royal court at Thebes. Foremost of these is "child of the nursery", a designation borne by the sons of nobles and foreign princes who were sent to the Egyptian court to be brought up with the children of the Pharaoh. These classmates of the Pharaoh proudly bore this title into their old age as an indication of their childhood association with the great court at Thebes. Second, he was "bearer of the folding chair of the lord of the two lands", a designation relating to his ceremonial position in the royal service. Third, he is called "king's sandal" or "king's sandalmaker", a title which either stresses his subservience to the ruler or else suggests that Miam was a region in which a leather industry of note flourished.

Funerary statuette of Heka-nefer.
Photo © W.K. Simpson, Pennsylvania-Yale Egyptian expedition

Servants for the life hereafter

The most exciting discoveries in the tomb were the five funerary statuettes of the prince which were found in the pit leading to the burial chamber. Cast aside by the grave robbers who had removed all the finery and treasure buried with the body, these statuettes were the prince's *shawabtis*—statuettes inscribed with a text explaining that they would take the owner's place in the after-life every time he was called upon to perform manual labour. They are among the finest *shawabtis* ever found in Nubia.

A Coptic stela

At Arminna West the expedition turned its attention to a site previously thought to be that of a monastery complex but which is perhaps better described as a settlement inhabited successively in the Meroitic, X-Group and Christian periods. The most unexpected feature was a Coptic church similar to several of the small churches found further to the south. In the small apse a Coptic tomb stela of terracotta showed that the church was probably in use in the 10th century. ■

EXPEDITION: DUTCH ARCHAEOLOGICAL MISSION TO NUBIA

SITES: **SHOKAN, ABDALLAH NIRQI**

REPORTER: H.D. SCHNEIDER

Late Meroitic settlement at Shokan

FROM 1962 to 1964 the Dutch mission excavated a late Meroitic period (1st to 4th century AD) settlement, consisting of more than thirty houses, at Shokan, some two to three kilometres north of the Abu Simbel temples. The settlement was notable for a three-room unit house system. The houses had vaulted roofs, the doors were lined with stone elements and the walls had niches and sometimes red painted band decorations. A fine eggshell ware beaker was found. It was decorated with black line drawings of two prisoners tied to a stake in the presence of a panther.

The church of Abdallah Nirqi

The mission discovered and excavated an 8th century church at Abdallah Nirqi, four kilometres north of Abu Simbel. The mud brick church measured 15 by 12 metres and the walls were preserved to a height of 3.5 metres. In the central part of the church a staircase of seven steps led to the pulpit. Walls and ceilings were covered with painted scenes of the Holy Family and important historical figures of the Nubian Church. Many of these paintings were saved by the efforts of an Egyptian/Yugoslav restoration mission.

Man in the jar.
Photo © H.D. Schneider, Netherlands

Christ and the Four Holy Beings

On the east wall of the right wing of the church was a mandorla containing a bust of Christ surrounded by the Four Holy Beings of the Revelations, a man, an eagle, a calf and a lion. To this motif a rich Greek cross, in Christian Nubia a symbol of new life, has been added. To the left of the mandorla is the figure of a priest with a palm branch in his hand.

Prisoner in the jar

A unique mural painting at Abdallah Nirqi depicts a saint riding a white horse. Between the legs of his mount is seen a naked, bearded man, imprisoned in a storage jar, who cries out "Kyrie eleison", Lord have mercy. This is thought to be the representation of the climax of a lost legend, when a Christian shut up by heathens in a vessel-prison prays to a saint for help and deliverance. The theme of imprisonment in a vessel is known in Greek mythology and it is believed that in the ancient East slaves were sometimes punished by being enclosed in a "pythos", the grain storage vessel of the granary. ■

EXPEDITION: HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

SITE: **ABDALLAH NIRQI**

REPORTER: L. TÖRÖK

THE mission of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences started work in Lower Nubia in summer 1964, at a time when only a few weeks remained available for excavation. The site was on the west bank of the Nile four kilometres north of the famous rock temples of Abu Simbel.

Although the significance of the remains of Abdallah Nirqi (the name derives from the name of a local farmer who lived near the site in the 1930s) had already been recognized by the First Archaeological Survey, it was still a surprise when, in a church on the desert side of the site, the Dutch Mission discovered wall-paintings of the 8th-12th centuries representing an artistic wealth rivalling that of the Faras cathedral. After clearing the church and detaching the wall-paintings, the Dutch Mission had been obliged to leave Abdallah Nirqi and, when the Hungarian Mission accepted the proposal of the Antiquities Service of Egypt to take over the concession, it decided to concentrate its activity on the settlement and the Christian cemetery belonging to it.

The bishop, the archangel and the saint on horseback

The central part of the settlement, including the church excavated by the Dutch Mission, was surrounded by a citadel wall. Two other churches were discovered outside the wall. One of them, the Western Church, was built shortly after the citadel church was completed in the 8th century. The other one, the Eastern Church, at the village cemetery, was built some decades later. The Western Church was decorated with wall-paintings in the 11th century. The decoration of the Western Church was, however, destroyed fairly early on by the collapse of the vault. Scraped-off pieces of the painting were found scattered around in the filling of the new floor laid after the vault was rebuilt. From the fragments we were able to reconstruct three figures: those of a bishop, of an archangel and of a saint on horseback. ■

EXPEDITION: THE SPANISH MISSION TO NUBIA

SITES: **SHEIKH DAUD, MASMAS, ARGIN, QASR IKO, ABKANARTI**

REPORTER: E. RIPOLL-PERELLO AND M. LLONGUERAS-CAMPANA

THE Spanish mission began work in Nubia in 1961. It was divided into two teams, one operating at Sheikh Daud and Masmas, in Egyptian Nubia, and the other at Argin, Qasr Iko and the island of Abkanarti, in Sudanese Nubia.

A fortress with a Roman-style street plan

In the fortress of Sheikh Daud, built in the second half of the 6th century, thirty-eight dwellings and a church were excavated. The streets were found to be laid out on the model of a Roman encampment. Abundant finds were made of pottery, metal objects, seals and sandstone plaques, weights, fragments of necklaces and some sculptures, as well as some architectural items. However, no inscriptions were found.

Excavations at Masmas

A large quantity of prehistoric and historic rock carvings and inscriptions were found and several cemeteries, including C-Group, New Kingdom, Meroitic and Christian burials were excavated. The Meroitic cemeteries provided the richest findings of any site examined by the Spanish expedition in Nubia. They included a number of sculptures very characteristic of the art style of the period, inscriptions, interesting decorated offertory tables and, of particular interest, some fine decorated vessels and an outstanding vase ornamented with floral and anthropomorphic designs.

In Sudanese Nubia

The extensive Argin region, on the west bank of the Nile, proved to be rich in tombs from the C-Group and Pharaonic periods to the Christian era. These provided a wealth of finds from every epoch. An outstanding item from the Pharaonic period was a fragment of a painted sarcophagus dating from the 19th Dynasty. The Meroitic period burials yielded some silver and silver-gilt vases, a great variety of jewellery and a number of weapons.

Two island sites

Further south, the expedition investigated sites on the islands of Qasr Iko and Abkanarti. On Qasr Iko two small Christian churches were excavated and in one of them the remains of some murals were discovered. On Abkanarti a village with a fortified wall and a small fortress perched on a rocky hill were examined. An interesting find in this village was a metal foundry furnace and pottery kiln. ■

EXPEDITION: YUGOSLAV INSTITUTE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HISTORIC MONUMENTS

SITES: **WADI ES SEBUA, ABU ODA, SHEIKH ABD EL GADIR, ABDALLAH NIRQI**

REPORTER: MILORAD MEDIC

THE Institute's contribution to the Nubian campaign consisted primarily of the difficult and delicate task of removing, transferring and preserving mural paintings from temples and churches at a number of sites.

Artists from every age left their mark on the Valley of the Lions (Wadi es Sebua). Prehistoric rock drawings were found not far from the Egyptian reliefs and Christian paintings that adorned a temple built by Ramses II and subsequently converted into a Coptic church. Artists who accompanied the first Christian missionaries painted fine portraits of St. Peter and St. George, crosses and other Christian symbols over the Egyptian reliefs. Today more than thirty mural paintings from the temples of Wadi es Sebua can be seen in the museums of Cairo.

Coptic art from Abu Oda and Abdallah Nirqi

At Abu Oda the mission removed from the temple of Horemheb some of the oldest and finest Christian mural paintings found in Nubia, including a representation of Christ and a holy martyr. Meanwhile, a team of Dutch archaeologists had discovered a small Christian church at Abdallah Nirqi which contained a number of well preserved murals including a fine mandorla. These, too, were removed by the mission and sent to the Coptic Museum in Cairo.

Sheikh Abd el Gadir

The final task of the mission was the removal from the 9th century church of Sheikh Abd el Gadir of some fine murals including one of a Nubian eparch holding a model of the church in his hand, a nativity scene and a portrayal of the Holy Trinity.

A technical feat

The removal and preservation of these murals by the Yugoslav mission was a very considerable technical feat. In many cases the murals were liable to fall to pieces at a touch. Before undertaking the work the Yugoslav Institute carried out a series of preliminary experiments which resulted in the development of the techniques successfully employed under the difficult conditions of the Nubian campaign. ■

The mandorla mural at Abdallah Nirqi.
Photo © M. Medic, Yugoslavia

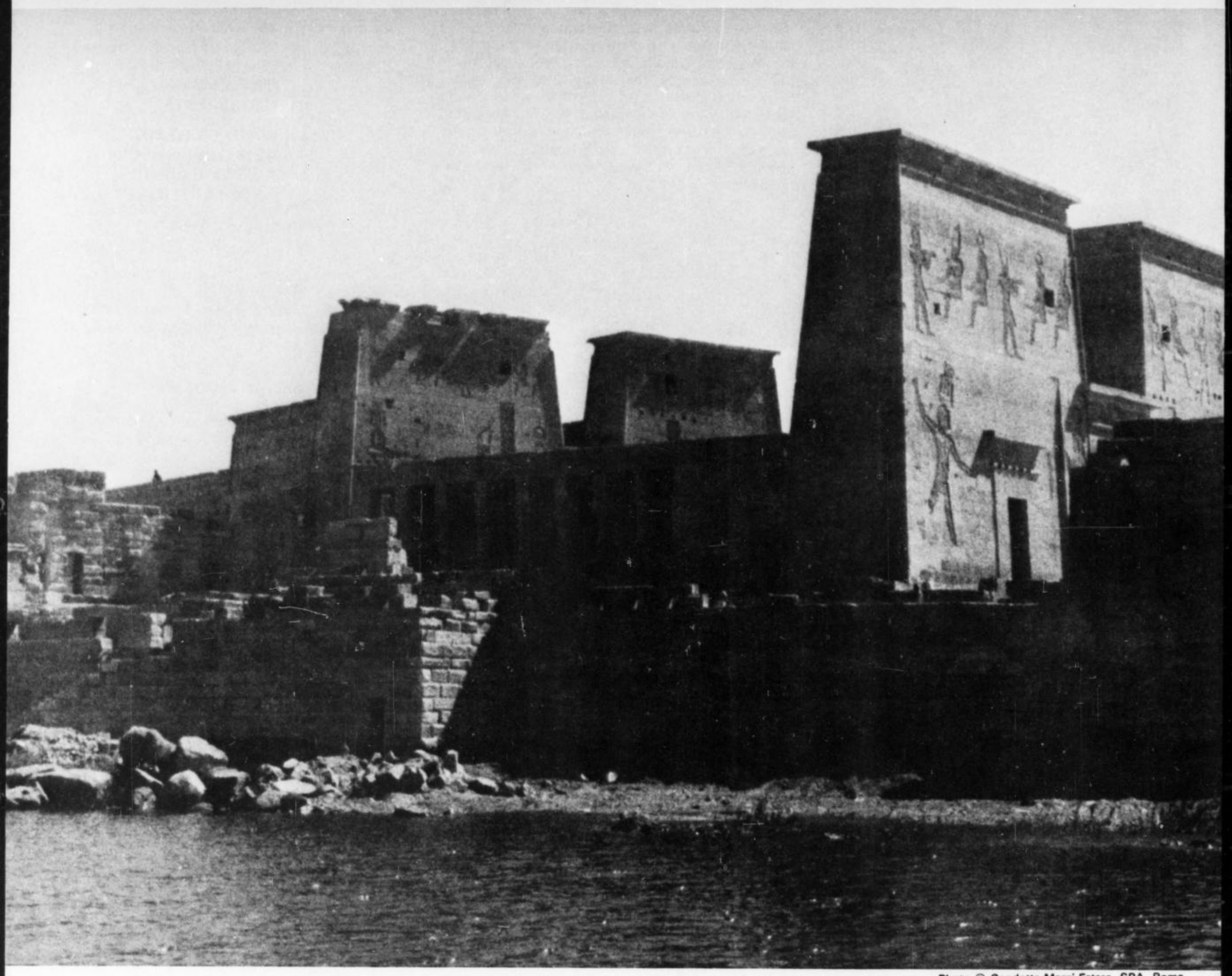


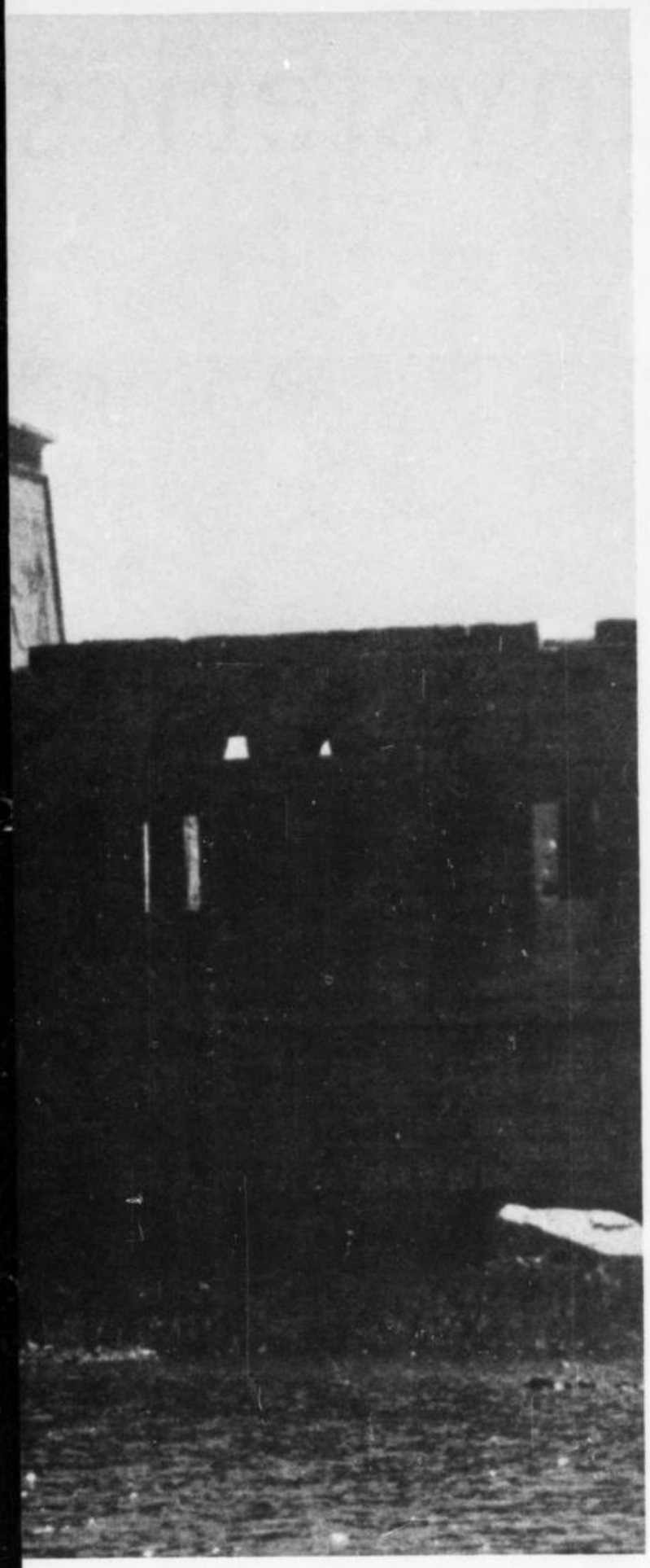
Photo © Condotte-Mazzi Estero, SPA, Rome

The holy isle of Philae

Photos on these pages show three episodes in the chequered story of the monuments of Philae in modern times. Engraving (opposite page, top) shows the island as it was in the mid-19th century, high and dry above the Nile, its temples virtually unchanged since Antiquity. The threat to Philae goes back to the turn of the century when the first Aswan Dam was built downstream of the island and later raised on two occasions (1907-1912 and 1929-1934). For thirty years (1934-1964) the temples were engulfed in the Lake formed behind the Dam except for three months each year when the Dam's sluices were opened and the monuments emerged in their entirety. When the waters were at their highest only the tips of the twin towers of the first pylon of the temple of Isis were visible. Photo opposite page shows Philae during this period. It was taken shortly after the sluice gates had been closed and the waters were starting to rise. The monuments survived their plight because the Egyptian Antiquities Service had consolidated their foundations before the Dam was built. Then, in 1960 the construction of the new High Dam *upstream* brought the threat of eventual destruction to Philae. From now on the monuments would be at the mercy of the waters *between* the two Dams (since the original Aswan Dam continues to function). By 1965 the temple of Isis was permanently flooded to about half its height. Daily fluctuations in the water level (up to six metres) gradually eroded the monuments. After several rescue projects had been considered, it was decided to dismantle the monuments and re-erect them on the nearby island of Agilkia which is always above the water level (see photo caption page 13). Photo above shows the temple of Isis on Agilkia, which was specially landscaped to resemble Philae.

WHEN the Pharaoh Nectanebo I (380-363 BC) built a temple at Philae, no one could have foreseen how prominently the island and its priesthood would figure in Egyptian politico-religious history for the next thousand years. In 332 BC, thirty-one years after the death of Nectanebo I, Egypt was conquered by Alexander the Great and, for the three centuries following his conquest, the throne was occupied by rulers of Macedonian stock, all of whom bore the name of Ptolemy except the last, who was the famous queen Cleopatra (51-30 BC). From the outset, they adopted the Egyptian religion, and in particular the cult of Osiris and Isis. Philae's principal monument, the temple of Isis, was built by Ptolemy II, Philadelphus (285-246 BC), and Ptolemy III, Euergetee I (246-221 BC), apart from the main doorway of the First Pylon which was a relic of the temple of Nectanebo.

It was not only in Egypt, however, that the cult of Isis and Osiris had advanced in



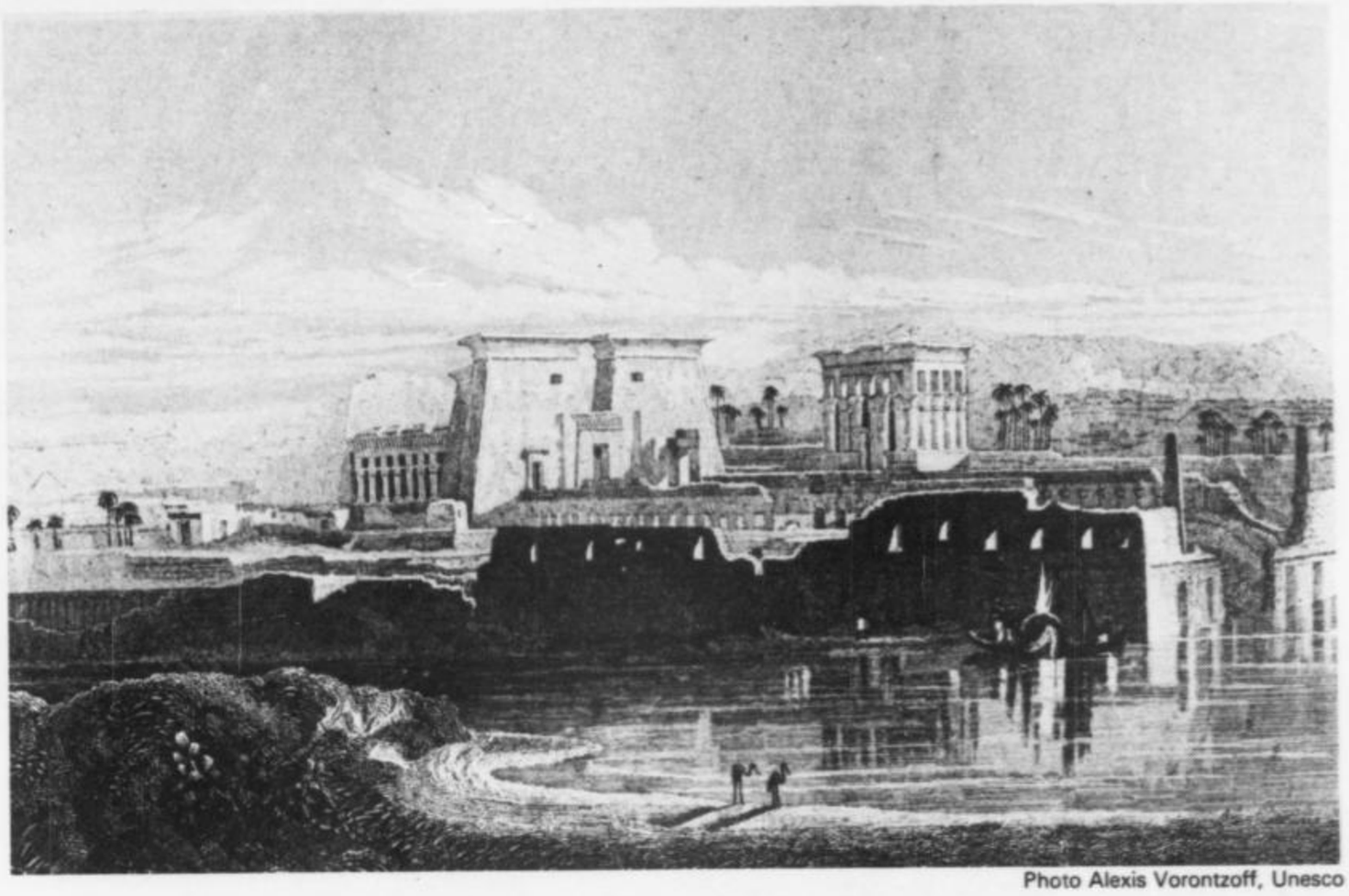


Photo Alexis Vorontzoff, Unesco

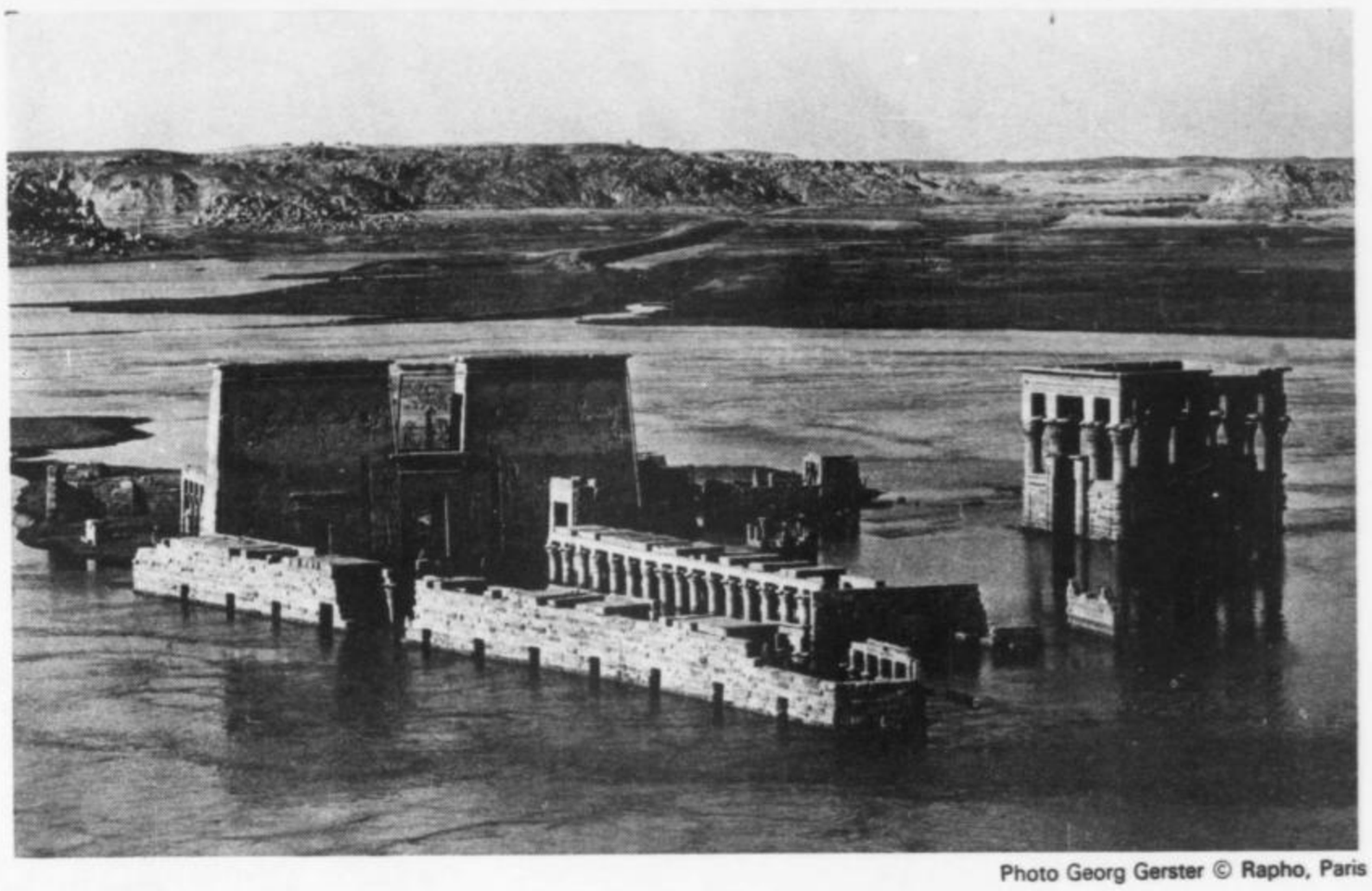


Photo Georg Gerster © Rapho, Paris

by Iorwerth E.S. Edwards

popularity during the Ptolemaic Period. Greek settlers, many of whom were traders, had transported it to their native land and its dependencies, with the result that by the year 30 BC, when the Mediterranean countries, including Egypt, were united under Roman rule, the cult was firmly established throughout the Aegean region. It had, moreover, reached Rome, where Isis acquired the reputation of being the protectress of mariners, and thence it spread to the remotest parts of the Empire.

At first, Philae received no visible proof of imperial patronage, apparently because Augustus was disinclined to show partiality towards Isis, who had been the goddess of his enemy, Cleopatra, but eventually he relented and, in the eighteenth year of his reign (9 BC), he built a temple at the northern end of the island. Much of it is now lost, but those of its architectural elements which have survived show that it was once a fine edifice.

Tiberius, Augustus' successor, and several later Emperors also left their mark at Philae, mostly by adding reliefs and inscriptions to existing monuments, but four Emperors erected new buildings, namely Claudius (AD 41-54)—a temple to Harendotes, Trajan (AD 98-117)—the most celebrated of all Philae's monuments, the kiosk on the east side of the island, Hadrian (AD 117-138)—the gateway and vestibule near the temple of Harendotes, and probably Diocletian (AD 284-305)—the ceremonial gateway at the northern end of the island.

While the cult of Isis was gaining adherents across the Mediterranean, it was also making headway in Nubia, even as far south as the kingdom of Meroe, whose capital lay about 75 miles north-east of Khartoum. One of the kings of Meroe, Ergamenes, enlarged the temple of Arsenuphis and travellers from Meroe left graffiti on the roof of the Birth-House of the temple of Isis.

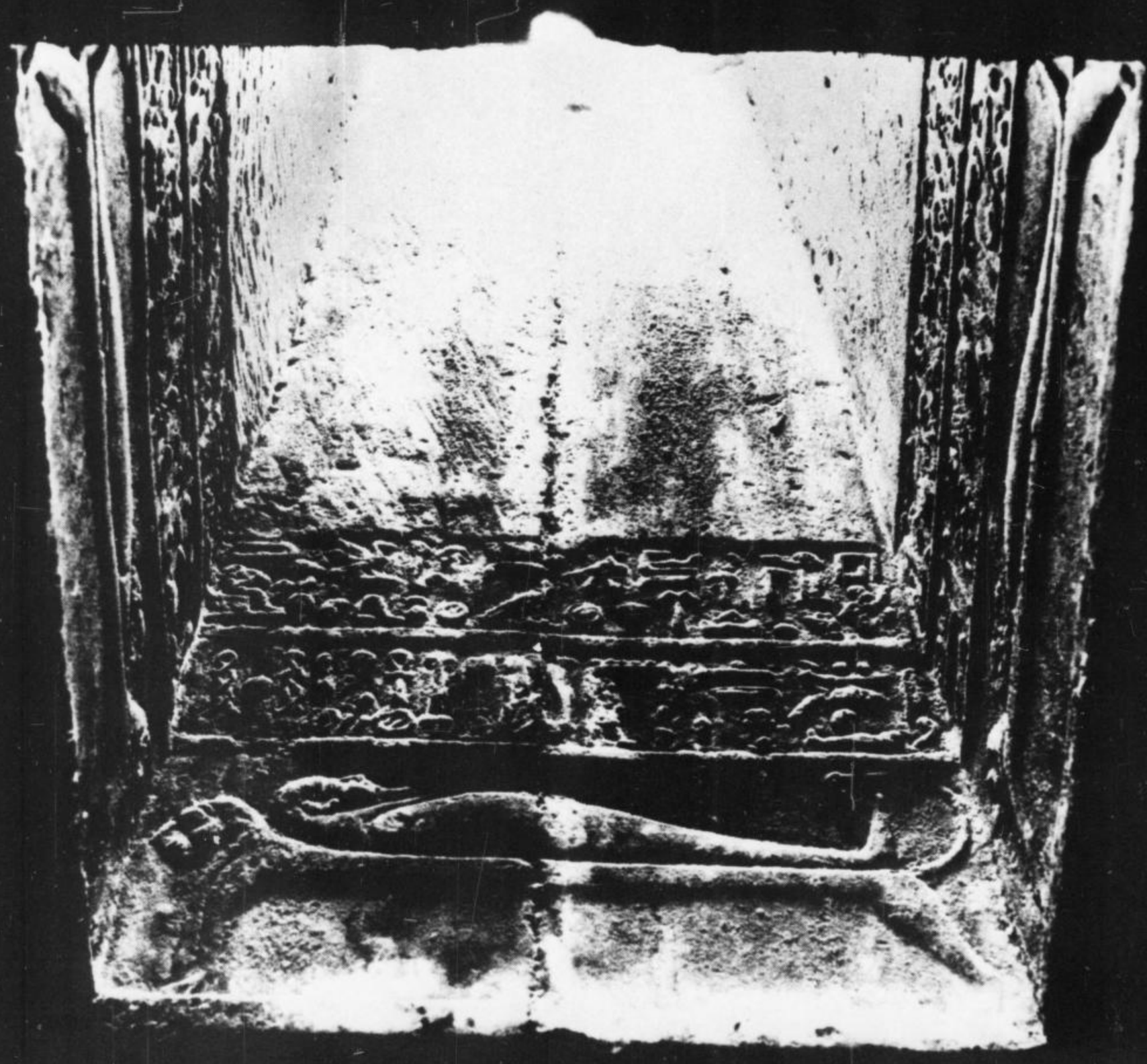
It was in Lower Nubia, however, that the cult of Isis made its greatest impact, especially in the so-called Dodekaschoenos, the territory extending southwards for 80 miles from the First Cataract to Maharraqa. For the inhabitants of that region Philae became the religious metropolis.

Philae retained its privileged position even after the Emperor Theodosius I issued his decree in AD 391 suppressing pagan worship throuthout the empire. Political expediency was undoubtedly the chief rea-

CONTINUED PAGE 70

IORWERTH E.S. EDWARDS, *of the United Kingdom, was Keeper of Egyptian Antiquities at the British Museum until his retirement in 1974. He was a member of the Committee of Archaeologists and Landscape Architects appointed by Unesco and the Egyptian Ministry of Culture to advise on the removal of the monuments of Philae to Agilkia. He is the author of several books including* The Pyramids of Egypt, *Max Parrish, 1961.*

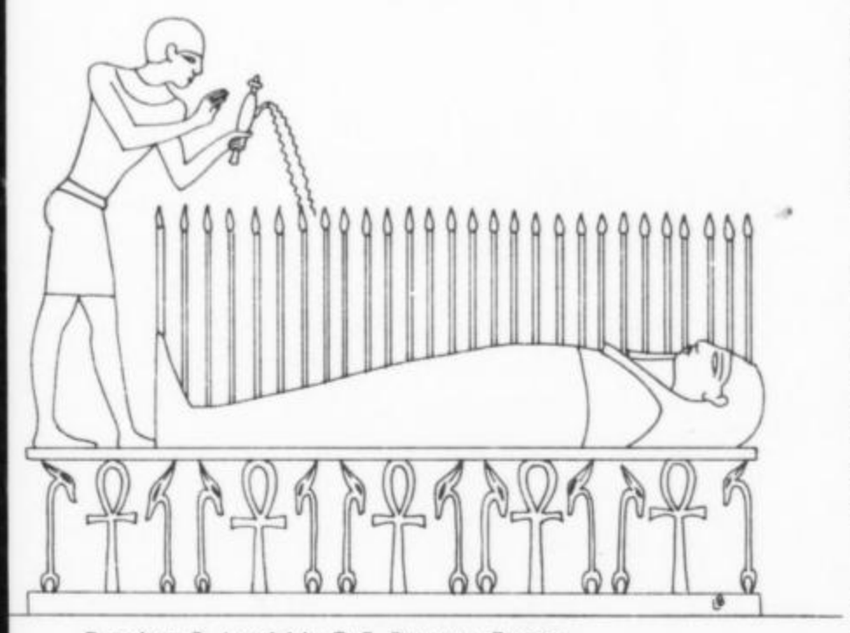
The mysteries



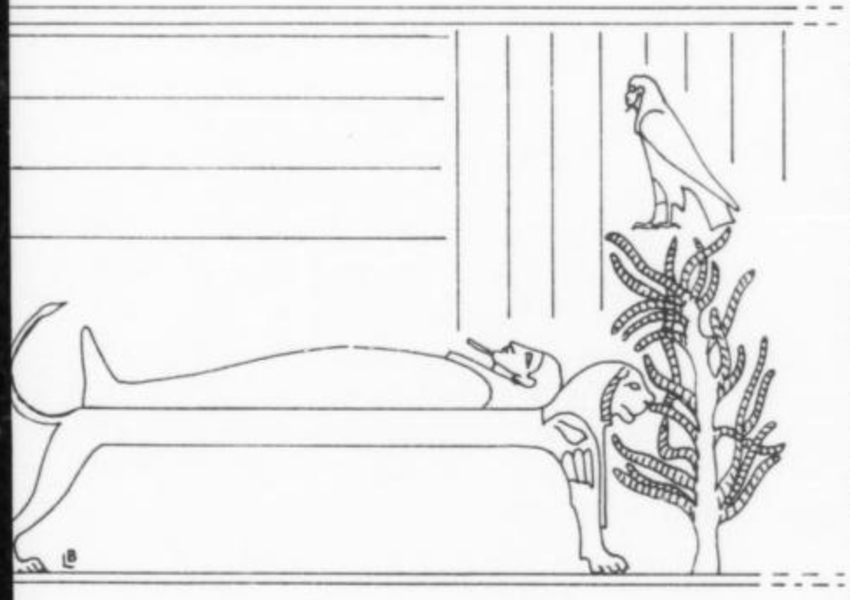
# of Isis and Osiris

by François Daumas

Two episodes from the myth of the god Osiris are shown in these drawings of bas-reliefs from Pharaonic temples. Scene below from a Philae chapel depicts a priest watering an effigy of the god made of river mud and sprouting with barley shoots. It is a reminder that Osiris was a god of agriculture, the personification of Egyptian soil and its periodic rebirth, before he became the ruler of the underworld who guaranteed a life hereafter. After being murdered and hacked to pieces by his brother Seth, Osiris was given new life by his faithful wife Isis and came to symbolize the triumph of good and innocent creatures over death. In the 1st century AD the Osiris-myth was described by the Greek writer Plutarch who claimed to have heard it at first hand from the Egyptian priests. Lower drawing from the temple of Dendara corresponds to Plutarch's description of the tomb of Osiris in the *abaton,* the inviolate sanctuary on the island of Bigeh in the Nile (see map next page). The mummified body of Osiris stretched out an a funeral bed is shaded by a shrub on which the god's *baï* or soul, is perched.



Drawings B. Lenthéric © F. Daumas, France



Sunlight streaming through an aperture in the roof of the temple of Dendara strikes the body of Osiris on his funeral bed. This symbolic scene evokes the death and resurrection of one of the most important Egyptian gods, Osiris lord of the underworld.

Photo © Henri Stierlin, Geneva

IN pre-Christian times in Egypt, the appearance of the First Cataract of the Nile was quite different from what it is today. The shallow river swirled amidst pink granite rocks darkened and polished by its waters. On each bank, great drifts of copper and gold sand were interspersed with rocks of more sombre hues. Islands of all sizes emerged from this riot of colours and sounds.

Upstream from Aswan and Elephantine, on the eastern side of the river, were three islands, all close together: the rock-island of Konosso, where in the days of the Pharaohs visiting kings and officials engraved inscriptions; the island of Philae where until a year or two ago the temple of Isis still stood; and the island of Bigeh, once the site of the *Abaton,* or sanctuary of Osiris (see article page 46). Although we do not know for certain how such an imposing temple came to be dedicated to Isis at the frontier of Nubia, legend and mythology furnish their own distinctive explanation.

Osiris had once reigned over Egypt and had taught its people agriculture, animal husbandry and justice. He had married his sister Isis, a wise and powerful enchantress, who was deeply in love with her husband. Unlike Isis and Osiris, their brother Seth, God of the barren desert, was incapable of any creative act and had an evil character.

One day, during a banquet, Seth locked up Osiris in a coffin and threw it into the sea. Isis set out in search of her husband's body, which she recovered at Byblos. She brought it back to Egypt where it was discovered by Seth in the marshes of the Delta. He cut up the body into fourteen pieces and scattered them in the Nile.

Isis travelled all over the country and retrieved the dispersed fragments of her husband's body. In order to thwart Seth's evil intentions, she pretended to bury each part of the body where she found it so that it would be impossible to know exactly where Osiris was really interred. Consequently, the various Osirian legends differ on this point. Some believed that he had been buried at Abydos, where his head was preserved, while for others the burial place was at Memphis, Busiris or Taposiris. Others still claimed that he was to be found in the *Abaton* of Philae. For the local priests, there could be no doubt that his final resting place was on Bigeh, the Holy Island as it is called in the inscriptions on the Temple of Isis.

Here on the island of Bigeh there was a monument which no one was allowed to approach except for the small group of priests who were in charge of funerary rites. This is why the Greeks named this site the *Abaton,* the inviolate area within which it was forbidden to penetrate. The tomb, probably very austere, was located inside a sacred grove where perseas, jujube and acacia trees grew. This small monument was shaded by the "Methide" tree about which much has been written but whose species has never been identified. It was, at any rate, taller than an olive tree. In the grove 365 tables of offerings were set out so that a libation of milk could be poured out every day of the year. Up above, in the tree which shaded the tomb, was perched the *bai* of Osiris, one of the elements of the God's personality. In order that the *bai* could drink continuously of the regenerative milk, the tables were covered with leafy palm stalks which kept the liquid fresh. Each day this ritual was celebrated by the highest-ranking priest, who doubtless also officiated at the temple of Bigeh, whose ruins are still standing in the eastern part of the island, facing Philae.

The "pure Island" was supposed to remain in eternal silence, so that the god's sleep should never be disturbed. Not only was it forbidden to talk in a loud voice, but the beating of the tambourine, an action symbolizing joy, was also prohibited. No one was allowed to sing to the accompaniment of the harp or the flute. According to the legend, birds and fish kept away from the island; in any case it was strictly forbidden to hunt and fish there.

Every ten days, Isis visited her husband's funeral mound to pour out the libation and to adorn his tomb. She crossed the river, which was narrow at this point, on a sacred barque called *The Protectress.* The ceremonies were particularly solemn on the 12th Epiphi which, if our calculations are correct, corresponds to the 17th of July. On that day Harendotes, *Horus who protects his father,* accompanied Isis on the sacred pilgrimage. Although the information at our disposal is incomplete, it seems that the main purpose of this celebration was to present the funerary offerings. The specific details remain obscure, but we can be certain that Isis offered milk. Sometimes the inscriptions seem to indicate that libations of water were also offered. However, the same Egyptian word is used to designate both *water* and *liquid,* and it is hard to be completely sure about what exactly took place during this ritual.

These ceremonies, unique to Philae, were partly a result of the geographic disposition of the islands of the cataract. Nonetheless, it is certain that the major Osirian rites observed in many other cities which worshipped Osiris, such as Edfu, Dendara, Abydos, Memphis, Sais, Busiris, were also performed at Philae. During one of these rites, known as the *Guard of the Hours,* the gods stood around the body of Osiris and kept a vigil during the twelve hours of night and the twelve hours of day. Each of them took turns in addressing the body of Osiris

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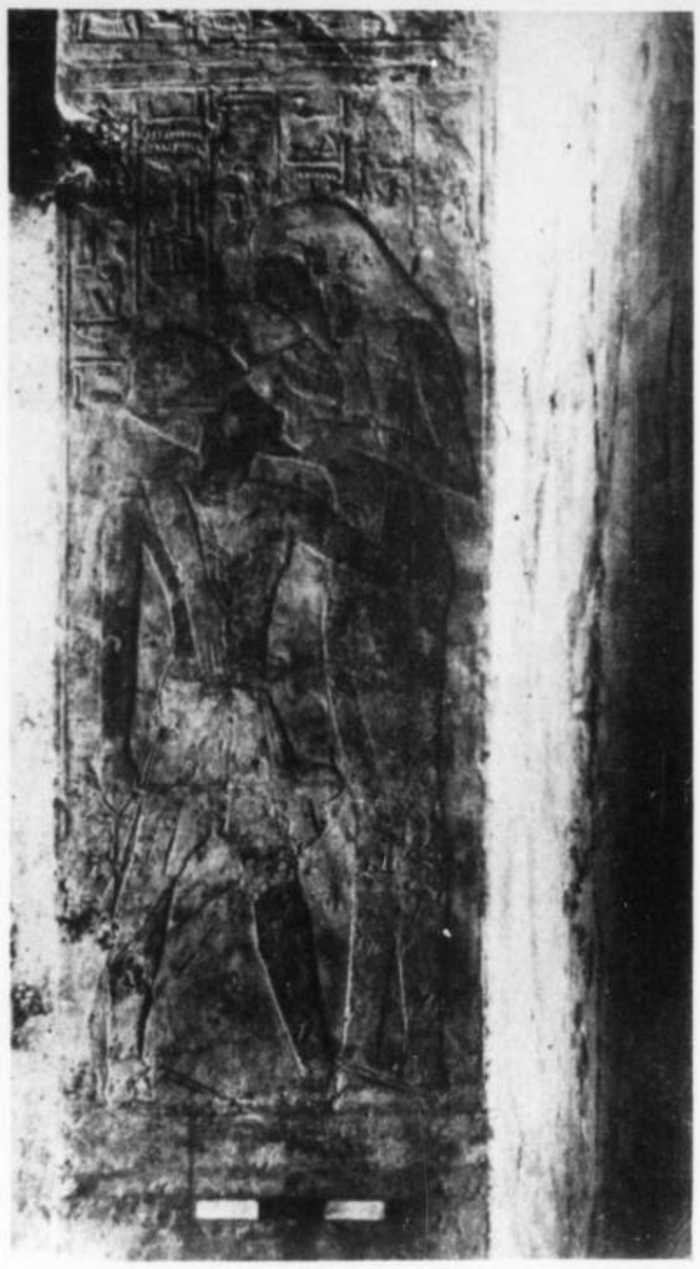
For the ancient Egyptians, symbolic suckling marked the transition from one stage of life to another. When a young prince became king he passed from the mortal to the immortal world and drew sustenance and wisdom from the divine milk to perform his sovereign mission on earth. Right, the Nubian goddess Anukis, who was worshipped on Elephantine Island with the god Khnum, suckles the young Ramses II. Far right, the Pharaoh is suckled by the incarnation of motherhood, the goddess Isis, who brought up her son Horus in the marshes of the Delta at Chemnis, constantly afraid that Seth would hunt him down and kill him. Photos show reliefs from the temple of Beit El Wali, which was saved from the Nile waters during the Nubian campaign.



Photos © Documentation Centre for Ancient Egypt, Cairo

laid out on its bier, and spoke words which would bring him back to life.

It is difficult to summarize this long discourse which is known from copies engraved on the walls of Philae, Edfu and Dendara. The task is further complicated by the fact that the inscriber constantly makes use of allusions, and omits vital information, for the Osirian religion possessed mysteries, in the Greek sense of the term, and as with the Eleusinian mysteries it was forbidden to reveal them. Plutarch's treatise on *Isis and Osiris,* the only work to provide a coherent account of this myth, is silent about certain episodes that were absolutely secret. A famous hymn dedicated to Osiris, engraved on a stela now in the Louvre Museum, is a masterpiece of discretion, only alluding to the death and resurrection of the god in obscure sentences. Plutarch says nothing about either of these events.

However, in the *Guard of the Hours* Isis is made to say the following words: *I clothed him who was naked on the banks of the Nedyt.* From this we may conclude that Osiris was stripped of his clothing after being murdered in the accursed place cited in documents dating back to the time of the pyramids. The same text reduces Isis' search to the following description: *I flew over the country; I crossed the primordial ocean; I recognized the thing close by the river.* These sentences obviously refer to the goddess's sustained efforts to re-unite the scattered parts of the divine body and describe the success which crowned her search. *The thing* is the god's body, whose parts lay on the banks of the river.

A description of the resurrection rites, the most sacred and secret of all, is also lacking. It may be imagined that the air wafted by the wings of his two sisters, Isis and Nephthys, breathed life back into Osiris. *Their wings are upon you,* the liturgical text states laconically. By comparing the half-confidences of the different versions of the myth we can make certain conjectures about what actually happened. A large scene on the tomb of the great priest Petosiris, with inscriptions that are strangely defaced and mutilated, informs us that gold, the material of which the sun-god Khepri was made, played a role in the rebirth of Osiris. Water also sustained him with its life-giving power:

[Through] the divine water that his heart loves,
The august *ioua*-plant grows green with life,
And when it grows green, the country grows green,
And thus the vindicated Osiris renews his rejuvenation.

The generative power of water was used in a symbolic rite performed during the festivities of the month of Khoiak, which corresponded approximately to our month of December. During this ritual, the priests commemorated Osiris's return to life. These festivities were so widespread and important in the lives of the Egyptians that later the Coptic Christians of Egypt replaced them during the same month by a liturgy specific to Egypt and known as the *Holy Psalm for the Month of Khoiak.*

During the Osirian celebrations in this month, a statuette of Osiris was made of sand and mud from the Nile, mixed with spices, in which grains of barley were planted. It was watered every day and the grains sprouted. This symbolism reflected the return to life of Isis's husband, as part of nature's great cosmic cycle. Each of the dead who had been initiated into the god's cult also became an Osiris in his own right, and hoped to be brought back to life with him. Thus large wooden frames in the shape of Osiris and adorned with his distinctive crown have been found in several royal

Map drawn in 1913 of the southern part of the First Cataract shows the islands in the lake behind the first Aswan Dam in summer after the Dam's sluicegates had been opened and the water level in the lake had dropped.

Drawing B. Lenthéric © F. Daumas, France

The Winged Enchantress

By wafting the air with her wings, the Great Enchantress Isis (left) slowly brought new life to her dead brother and husband Osiris. On the walls of Egyptian tombs Isis is often portrayed with outstretched wings, and in this bas-relief, now in the Louvre Museum in Paris, she is shown protecting the body of Ramses III. Carved in bas-relief on the Isis temple of Philae is the sacred boat (below left) in which Isis embarked every ten days for the nearby island of Bigeh to offer a libation of milk at the tomb of Osiris. Detail from a bas-relief in the Isis temple of Philae (below) shows reliquary containing the crowned head of Osiris. Nearby stands the mummified god, protected by the wings of Isis.

Photo © Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris

Photos © F. Daumas, France

tombs. The lower part of the frames, adorned with plaited reeds or flax, was covered with sprouted barley, and the entire object was wrapped up in bandages like a mummy. Plutarch makes a passing reference to these practices in his Treatise on Isis and Osiris.

In the Osirian tomb at Philae which sheltered the fragment of the god's body, on the roof of the temple of Isis, an extremely curious representation illustrated the creation of the vegetating Osiris in the month of Khoiak. A mummy-shaped statuette lies upon a kind of platform, borne by the symbols of stability and life. On top of the mummy grows a cluster of stalks ending in ears of corn, which a priest is carefully watering. Above, there is an inscription which reads as follows: *It is the unknown mystery produced by the water of the flood.* In this case, texts, royal funerary relics and tableaux all coincide to enable us to grasp the profound meaning of these rites which assured eternal life to the devotees of the ailing god. The Egyptian priests went so far as to believe that the grains of barley were the very essence of Osiris's body.

Let us imagine how the island of Philae must have appeared to the travellers and Egyptologists of the nineteenth century. The tiny village of Aswan, with its Bicharin nomads grouped to the south was truly the gateway to tropical Africa. Date-palms, acacias and doom-palms grew side by side. Calotropes flourished along the sides of the canals and on the edge of the desert. It seemed a very different world from that of Egypt. The copper-coloured sands and black rocks emerged from an overflowing river of brick-red water.

If the traveller proceeded southwards to the end of the Cataract, he would have seen to the east, the little island of Philae displaying among blue-green palm-trees and airy groves its kiosk, colonnades, porticoes and pylons, whose subdued but lively colours are now only evoked in a handful of plates in the works of the German Egyptologist Richard Lepsius (1810-1884).

In spite of the depredations committed by Justinian's warriors, Isis still seemed to reign over the harmonious landscape created by the architects of Antiquity. The size and proportions of the island perfectly illustrate the profoundly human quality of its gods and their transparent mystery: a divine king, just and benevolent, treacherously murdered; a dauntlessly faithful goddess, gifted with intelligence and sovereign power, recovers her husband, brings him back to life, and brings up his son to succeed his father, after vanquishing his enemy. Osiris and Isis will reward with blessed immortality those who worship them and those who, like them, act justly. Since the story echoes mankind's deepest needs, it comes as no surprise that this divine couple which reigned over the southern confines of Egypt should, through their inspiring and hopeful legend, conquer much of Europe from the Greek islands to the distant borders of Germania.

■ **François Daumas**

In this bas-relief sculpture from the Isis temple of Philae, Osiris lord of the dead is shown as a mummy swathed in bandages and covered by a shroud. On his head is a mitre adorned with tall feathers and twisted horns. He holds a sceptre and a whip. At right stands Isis with a symbolic key of life in her left hand. She is wearing a sun disc set between two cow's horns, the headdress of Hathor goddess of love, with whom Isis is sometimes equated.

Photo © Henri Stierlin, Geneva

The magic of Abu Simbel

by Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt

THE name Abu Simbel, today a byword for technological expertise and a landmark in international co-operation, was unknown to the general public only thirty years ago. In those days, few even among Egyptologists could boast that they had visited this holy site in Egyptian Nubia where, in two rocky bluffs rising from the Nile downstream of the Second Cataract, Ramses the Great had hewn for himself and his favourite queen, Nefertari, two *speos* or cave-temples decorated with magnificent reliefs and statues carved from the cliffside.

Abu Simbel was doubtless so little known because of its inaccessibility (the boat which linked the Egyptian and Sudanese railway systems only plied between the First and Second Cataracts once a week), but also because of declining interest in a region which had been partially flooded for nine months of the year since the height of the original Aswan Dam had been raised for the last time.

When the "Father of Egyptology", the Frenchman Jean-François Champollion (1790-1832) discovered the Egyptian past by seeking the testimony of its monuments, which revealed their story to him for the first time in 1827 and 1828, he did not stop halfway up the Nile as the famous *Commission des Sciences et des Arts* set up by Napoleon Bonaparte had had to do when its accompanying army led by Desaix halted across from the Island of Philae in 1799.

CHRISTIANE DESROCHES-NOBLECOURT, *of France, is chief curator of the Egyptian Antiquities Department of the Louvre Museum, Paris. She was Unesco consultant to the Documentation Centre for Ancient Egypt in Cairo and participated from its inception in the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia. A member of the directorate of the French* Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, *she is the author of many works on Egyptology including* Life and Death of a Pharaoh, *published by Rainbird Ltd., London, and the New York Graphic Society, New York.*

Below, façade of the smaller of the two temples of Abu Simbel after being dismantled and re-erected on its new site (see photo caption page 11). This rock-hewn sanctuary built by Ramses II on the left bank of the Nile is dedicated to the goddess Hathor and to Nefertari, the Pharaoh's favourite wife. On each side of the door two colossal statues of Ramses flank a statue of the queen. The rebuilt temple faces the rising sun, just as it did on its original site.

Photo Dominique Roger - Unesco

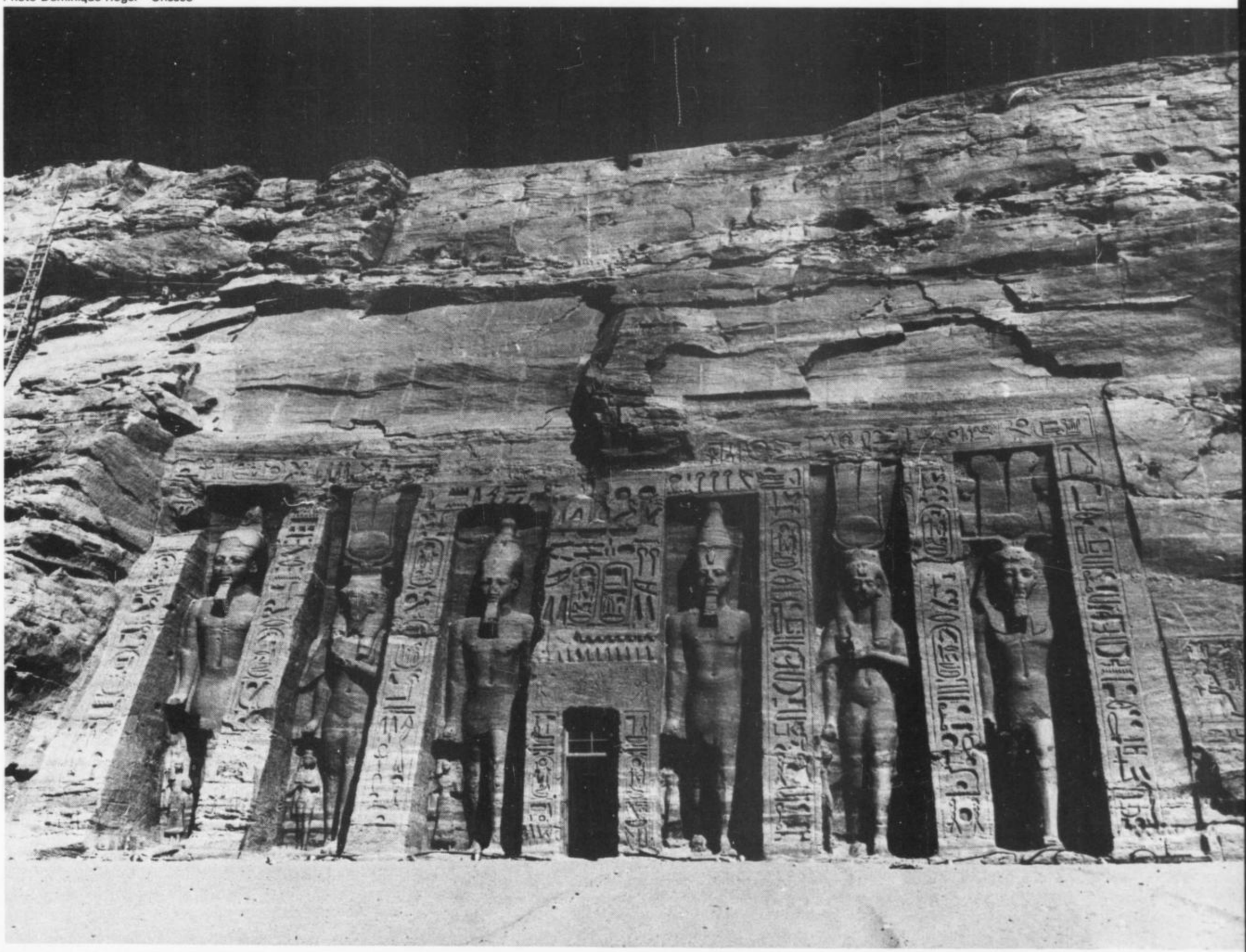


Photo © C. Desroches-Noblecourt, Paris

The image of the sun-god Re (left) dominates the entrance to the Great Temple of Abu Simbel. It is flanked by two bas-relief figures of Ramses II, each offering to the god in an outstretched palm the figure of the goddess Maat. The god's right hand rests on a sceptre, called *ouser* in ancient Egyptian; beneath his left hand is another small standing figure of the goddess Maat. The ensemble forms a representation in figures of Ramses' coronation name: *ouser-Maat-re*. The Great Temple was dedicated to the three principal gods of the age of Ramses: re-Horakhty the sun-god, Amon and Ptah.

It was from Abu Simbel that Champollion set out in order to survey and study systematically all the monuments he had noted as he travelled up the Nile from Cairo. His disciple, M. de Vaucelles, had already been able to read without difficulty the name Ramses on the walls of the great temple, using his teacher's method of decipherment. That was over one hundred and fifty years ago.

When the monuments of ancient Nubia stood in the greatest danger (the crucial years being, of course, those of the first third of the twentieth century), the Government of Egypt's Antiquities Service called on Egyptologists from various countries to make rapid surveys and to publish details of the most endangered sanctuaries. The latter were those which had been partially or completely erected of layers of sandstone (from Egyptian Nubia) and which stood very close to the Nile, such as the Ramesside *hemispeos* (temples partially constructed on and partially carved from the rock) of Derr and Wadi-es-Sebua (North), and the Greco-Roman temples and chapels of Dabod, Kertassi, Taffa, Kalabsha, Dendur, Dakka and Maharraqa.

The charming temple of Amada, dating from the glorious age of the Thutmoses, was built higher up and escaped immediate danger, but it too was rapidly surveyed. On the other hand, the famous *speos* of Beit-el-Wali, Gerf Hussein, Wadi es-Sebua (South), Abu Simbel and Abu Oda, were at that time beyond the reach of the rising waters and were not covered by the surveys; nor was the temple of Ellesiya. However, the construction of the new Aswan High Dam meant that the sites of these monuments would almost completely disappear beneath the risen waters of the river.

One of the tasks assigned to the Centre for Study and Documentation on Ancient Egypt, established in 1955, was to carry out a systematic survey, in the most scientifically exhaustive manner possible, of all these temples except one, and to publish the results. The exception was the *hemispeos* of Beit el-Wali, where the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago was authorized to conduct archaeological excavations (see page 43).

On the island of Philae, which lies to the south of the original Aswan Dam, meticulous precautions had been taken early in the century by the French Egyptologist Gaston Maspero (1846-1916), the Director-General of the Antiquities Service. Maspero organized the reinforcement of the foundations of the Philae monuments, and handed over responsibility for them to Captain Lyons, himself supervising the clearing and excavating operations, as well as the restoration of the superstructures of various sanctuaries. He strove to alert public opinion in order to save the island from submersion, but the time was not yet ripe for the magnificent display of solidarity which Unesco later called into being. Nevertheless, Maspero's appeal did not entirely fall on deaf ears, and his efforts were echoed in the French writer Pierre Loti's famous book *La Mort de Philae* (The Death of Philae). The survey of the religious buildings dedicated to the goddess Isis, assigned to the French Egyptologist Georges Bénédite (1875-1926) was begun at this period but could not be completed for lack of time.

Now that the Campaign to Save the Nubian Monuments is reaching its conclusion, and that its most prestigious achievements have been marked at Abu Simbel and at Philae by the dismantling and transfer of cave-temples and a group of stone-built sanctuaries, it is perhaps appropriate to ask what inspired the Pharaohs, during certain periods of history, to construct along the Nubian Nile far from the capital, so many sanctuaries which were not intended for use by the indigenous population; for in these temples, only the priests performed ritual acts of worship of the divine forms, including that of the Pharaoh himself.

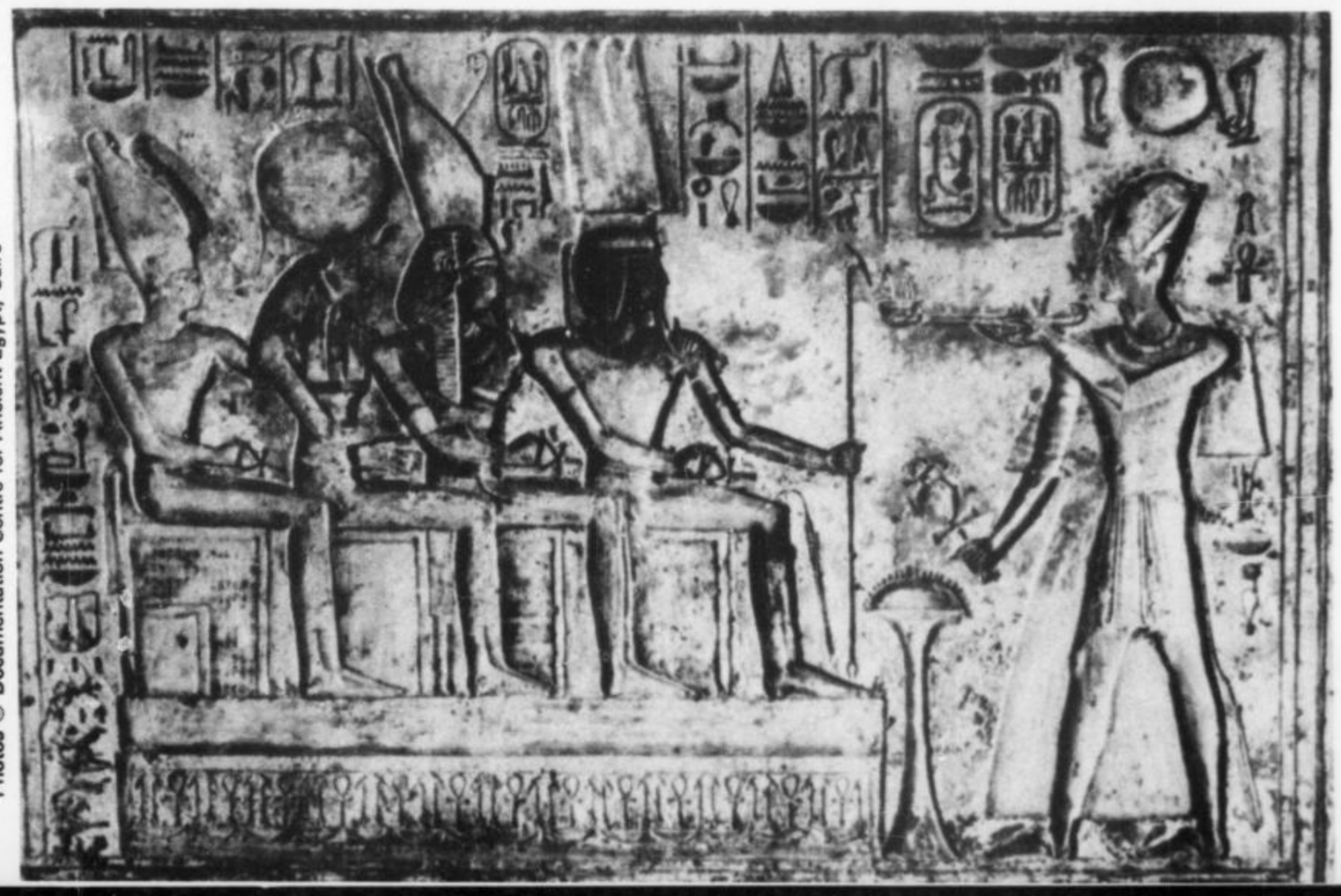
The Philae monuments, comprising the great sanctuary of the goddess Isis and the *Mammisi* (or "birth house"), the chapels of Osiris, of Hathor and of the sacred Barque, reveal above all through the texts inscribed on their walls, the overall symbolism and hence the significance of the rites celebrated in them; rites which marked the passing of the seasons, the trials of nature and of man, and the incarnations of divinity, the concept of which would be bequeathed by Late Egypt to the Western world.

The redoubtable fortresses at the Second Cataract were provided, doubtless during the first Kingdoms, with magnificent

Photo © Rex Keating, Paris

Ramses the God

The temples built by Ramses II in Nubia are an expression of the divine nature of the Pharaoh and queen Nefertari, his favourite wife. In the small temple of Abu Simbel, dedicated to Nefertari, is a scene showing her coronation by the goddesses Isis and Hathor (left). Woman, queen and goddess, Nefertari is portrayed wearing a crown with two lyre-shaped horns framing a sun-disc, and two tall feathers. Another bas-relief in the small temple depicts the coronation of Ramses himself (below left). The gods Seth and Horus, each standing on a pedestal, hold in eternal balance the emblems of royalty they have bestowed on the Pharaoh. An even more striking illustration of Ramses as a god is the relief (bottom photo) from the temple of Wadi Es Sebua. It shows the Pharaoh venerating four divinities, including himself (the others are Onuris, Tefnut and Nekhbet). In bas-relief from the small temple of Abu Simbel (below) Ramses, accompanied by Nefertari who is shaking a Sistrum, offers flowers to Taurt goddess of births. The plant offerings of papyrus buds and stems are a symbolic allusion to the birth in the marshes of the Delta of the child-god Horus, son of Isis and Osiris, and to the world's first blossoming. The scene is an affirmation of the divinity of the descendants hoped for by the royal couple, themselves part of the cosmic forces on which Egypt depended.



Photos © Documentation Centre for Ancient Egypt, Cairo

chapels intended to ensure that their bastions would be impregnable, as well as to pay tribute to the glory of the sovereign. Similarly, during the Late Period, the temple of Dakka was reconstructed on the ruins of the Thutmosid sanctuaries, located on the parallel which marked the end of the road to the Wadi Allaqi gold mines (see page 34).

What was the fundamental concern of Ramses II when he decided, several times in the course of his long reign, to establish cave-sanctuaries and *hemispeos* at Beit el Wali, Gerf Hussein, Wadi es-Sebua, Derr, North and South Abu Simbel, and Aksha? At least seven such temples have been found: six scattered from north to south along the left bank of the Nile in Egyptian Nubia, and one, the temple of Derr, on the right bank. Seven sanctuaries, hewn or erected along a 300-kilometre-long strip of land, where the cultivated area was in some places no more than 100 metres wide and where by the time of the New Kingdom many men were living and working in an Egypt which had become their metropolis.

It has been suggested, with some justification, that these temples may have been a form of political propaganda. But this hypothesis is not wholly satisfactory. It is true that in the chief divinity worshipped in each of these holy places may be found traces of the gods of the Empire who, under Ramses the Great, formed in an audacious syncretism the image of the all-powerful. This triunity, constituted by Amon, Re and Ptah, was conceived of as a large body, controlled by a head, but powerless without all its members. Amon, Re and Ptah were also the three divine forms which protected the armies of Ramses II at the battle of Kadesh in 1285 BC, when the Egyptian army was saved from defeat at the hands of the Hittites. The fourth army was placed under the guidance of the god Seth, who was considered to be beneficent under the Ramessidle rulers since their family and ancestors had adopted him as their protector. In his Nubian temples, it is possible that the audacity of the king, thus playing the role of Seth, led him so far as to substitute statues of himself for those of his divine ancestor.

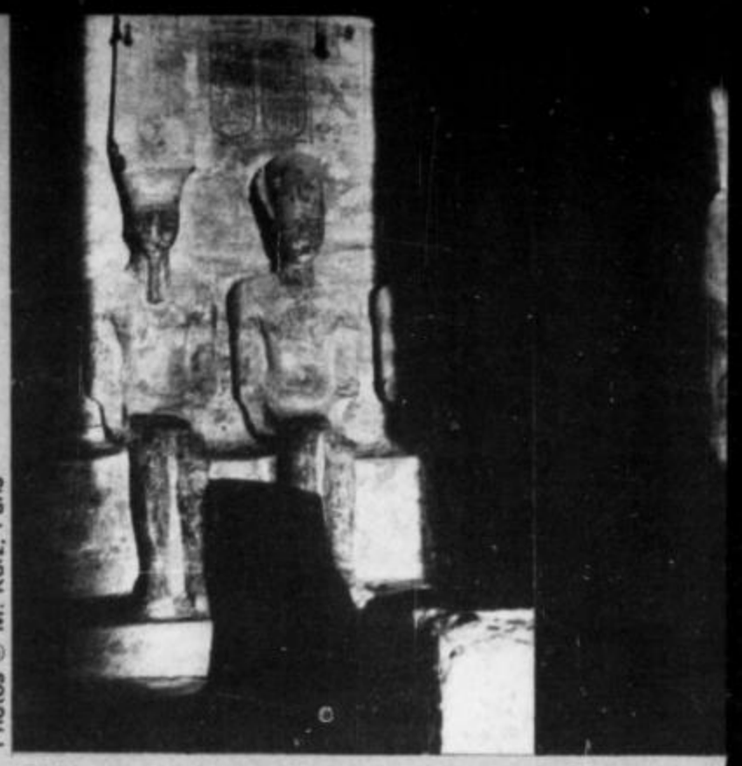
For in each sanctuary the Pharaoh is included in the group of divinities. The royal statue, sculpted in the recesses of the deep rock caves and surrounded by divinities, adopts the features of the godly form that he represents in each of these holy places: Ptah in the temple of Gerf Hussein; Amon at Wadi es-Sebua; and Re at Derr. This practice reaches its highest expression at Abu Simbel, where the two cave-temples, the most famous in the whole of upper Egyptian Nubia, may help us to unravel part of the mystery.

Set into the rock wall in the depths of the great temple are four statues representing Ptah, Amon, Ramses and Re-Horakhty seated side by side. At the equinox, when the first rays of sunlight appear on the horizon and penetrate the temple, they reach the divine figures in the depths of the sanctuary, and Amon, the King and Re-Horakhty are suddenly illuminated. Only the shoulder of the earth-divinity, Ptah, who decides when the earth's crust will split open, permitting the growth of all living things, is touched by the sun's rays. The King, a god among gods, is linked on one side to the hidden forces coming from the south, personified by Amon of Napata, who flows with and in the life-giving current of the Nile. On the other side of the royal statue, with Re-Horakhty, the King is touched with the light and heat of the sun, which is renewed each year on New Year's Day, and he is assimilated into these forces of light and heat.

Ramses II thus wished in his Nubian monuments to express in material form his total identity with the divine, of which he was no longer the earthly offspring, but would soon become the true incarnation. When he had finished building these temples throughout Nubia, he had left a record in stone of a Pharaoh who had become a god.

Thus the sculptor depicted him in the bas-reliefs on the walls of the Wadi es-Sebua sanctuary as the third figure in the triads of gods. As a god he receives homage, and pays homage in his turn, as King, to the gods amongst whom he figures.

Ramses must have been in at least the fortieth year of his reign when he returned to his great temple at Abu Simbel, built long before, and ordered the iconography to be changed. His silhouette was to be inserted as that of the son-divinity of each divine couple: on the south wall he takes the place of Khonsu between Amon and Mut, and between Ptah and Sekhmet he replaces Nefertum.



Photos © M. Kurz, Paris

5.58 am — 6.03 am

At certain times of the year, the rays of the rising sun, after illuminating the colossal figures on the façade of the Great Temple of Abu Simbel, pierce no less than sixty metres through the galleries and chambers hewn into the mountainside until they reach the very heart of the temple. Here, at

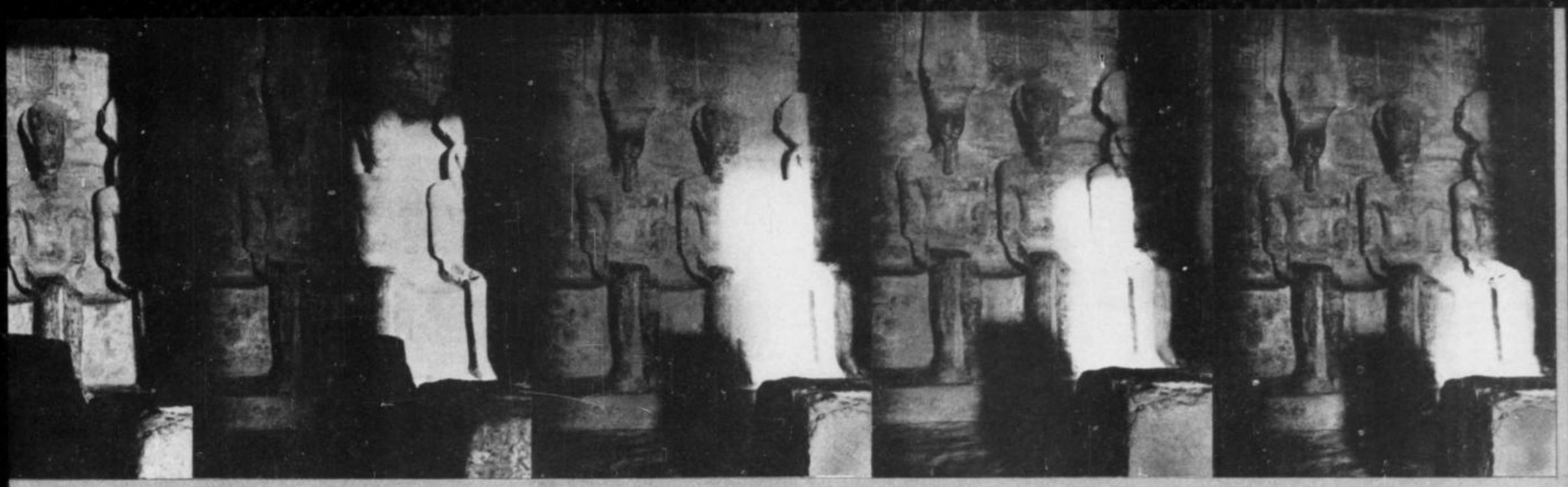
In the light of these phenomena, Egyptologists have come to grasp the significance of the figures on the temple walls. Anyone who subscribes to the theory that the many Ramesside sanctuaries were designed as a means of political or even religious propaganda must also admit that it was the very presence of these monuments which had an impact on the Nubians, for they, like the Egyptians, were denied access to the sanctuaries. Thus the rich iconography adorning the walls had been created solely as part of the internal func-

Photo Chuzeville © Louvre Museum, Paris

This low-relief on a wall of the Great Temple of Abu Simbel depicts scenes from the battle of Kadesh, when Ramses II led the Egyptian forces to victory over the Hittite army. The Pharaoh, colossal in proportion to the other figures, is holding a council of war with a group of officers. Upper frieze shows the charge of the Hittite cavalry. Below, the Egyptian camp can be seen protected by warriors armed with shields; in the centre two spies are forced to yield their secrets. Far right, chariot-borne archers of Ramses II's army.

Ramses II is here portrayed as a child. Falling across his right temple is the tress of hair, curled at the end, which indicates his status as a royal child. The right index finger touching the mouth is a convention often used by the Egyptians to denote childhood.

Photo Charles Nims © Documentation Centre for Ancient Egypt, Cairo



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the far end of the inner sanctuary, they pick out the seated figures of three immortals: Ramses, the god Amon, and the sun-god Re-Horakhty. A fourth statue portraying Ptah the god of creation does not fully emerge from the shadows. The moment when the radiant sunlight penetrated the darkness within the temple must have coincided with a key stage in the performance of the rites. To achieve this astonishing play of light the Egyptian architects and engineers left nothing to chance in their choice of site nor in the construction of the chambers within the mountain. This series of photos showing the gods at sunrise was taken on 19 October 1963. Today, rebuilt on its new site high above the Nile, the temple faces in exactly the same direction as before.

tioning of these sacred shrines. Its principal role lay in the "sympathetic magic" it was expected to perform: whatever was represented in the temples was conjured into existence and became "operative" for all eternity.

And so we can see why Ramses II should have been determined to make some of the reliefs in his great temple consonant with the concept of royalty which he had developed. Each year an important ceremony would be held at Abu Simbel to mark the predominant role of the sovereign in Egyptian life and the sovereign's assimilation, once and for all, into the great cosmic forces upon which Egypt relied.

Indeed, the meticulous study of the two temples which we carried out when we organized the Documentation Centre's scientific survey in Nubia, has revealed how closely related they were, paralleling, in fact, the male-female relationship of the royal couple. The temples were undoubtedly so designed, by order of the Pharaoh, that the axes of the two sanctuaries should converge in the Nile. Similarly the northern temple, in the direction associated with the female, was dedicated to the queen while the southern *speos* was reserved for the Sovereign. The façades alone of Abu Simbel present a striking resumé of their imagery: above the entrance of the great temple, Ramses appears in all the power and dynamism of majesty as the Sun-god, his falcon-head dominated by the Heavenly Body. This image is also a rebus, spelling out the king's coronation name.

The façade of the smaller temple is adorned with two pink sandstone statues of the young and radiantly beautiful Nefertari, flanked by statues of the Pharaoh. She seems ready to spring from the cliffside, to stand radiant on the horizon.

The reason why the great Nubian temples of Ramses (and probably even those built before and after them) were implanted in far-off Egyptian Nubia was undoubtedly connected with the life-giving Nile, with the Pharaoh's role as guarantor of the life and wealth of Egypt, and with the responsibility which in a sense he bore for the flooding of the Nile.

The temples of Abu Simbel must have been the site of most of the ceremonies marking the return of the floodwaters which each year brought renewed life to Egypt. This miraculous annual inundation, which inspired the Greek historian Hecataeus of Miletus (late 6th century BC), well before Herodotus, to write that Egypt was a gift of the Nile, coincided with the 19th of July in the Julian calendar and was announced in the Egyptian sky by the reappearance of the star Sothius, which had disappeared from view seventy days before.

A few moments after the rising of the star, and in approximately the same spot, the sun would suddenly appear on the horizon. This celebrated heliacal rising of Sothius (Sirius) heralded the rejuvenation of the earth and the beginning of the new year. This New Year's Day also marked the King's jubilee and the celebration of his revitalization.

Late Egyptian texts tell us how on this occasion the King also made a mystic voyage on the floodwaters of the Nile which had come to regenerate the land of his ancestors. It was at Abu Simbel, north of the Second Cataract, where these floodwaters entered Egyptian Nubia, that the sanctuaries dedicated to the royal couple provided the stage for a sublime mystery. It was here that preparations were made for the heliacal rising of Sothius. On the sandstone façades the event was portrayed in the forms of Nefertari-Sothius and Ramses-Sun, the reinvigorated guarantors of the fertility of an Egypt whose eternal productivity was heralded by the many offspring which escorted their sacred images.

■ **Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt**

Sermons in stones

The musings of a modern Egyptian poet before the temples of Abu Simbel

by Tewfik El Hakim

THE first time I went to Nubia was to visit the temple of Abu Simbel on its original site, before it was dismantled and rebuilt on the top of the mountain in order to protect it from flooding after construction of the High Dam. This grandiose project of moving a temple from its resting-place of three thousand years, without changing any facet of it, and without mislaying a single stone, is one of the great achievements of which Unesco may be justly proud.

We left Aswan by steamer for the south where the famous temple stood with its four statues representing Ramses II, with his wife Nefertari at his side, Ramses immensely tall, and the small figure of Nefertari barely reaching up to her husband's knees.

The steamer ploughed through the Nile, passing on either bank the houses of the Nubians, built of dark earth, on the walls of which they had drawn figures and faces which were striking in their simplicity and their vivid colours. This art of drawing was doubtless inherited from the distant past, from their ancestors. I do not know whether they were inspired by instinct or heredity, by a secret awareness, by meditation or by a deliberate will to imitation; for the Nubians are simple folk. They live at one with the silence of nature and the art of their ancestors.

At last we reached the temple and the boat was about to berth. Ramses, impressive, with his four statues sculpted into the mountain, and his wife Nefertari, seemed to be welcoming us.

After disembarking, we approached them and I began to contemplate them... I felt then that these figures of stone were not as mute as one might think. They talk to each other and understand each other, even though no movement crosses their motionless lips, and even though no-one hears them.... But I did hear them; I knew what they were saying...perhaps because of the spiritual bond that united us through time.

I cried out to them: "I am your son ! I hear what you say !". And I took out a sheet of paper and a pen to write down their strange conversation. Looking up at the rising sun, Ramses uttered these sybilline words:

"Every morning the Nile still flows at my eight feet and the sun shines on my three faces, since my fourth countenance has been effaced by the hand of time."

Nefertari:
"That is so, my dear husband,
This morning is the same long morning;
and the sun lights up my four faces;
time does not obliterate my fourth face;
for I hide under the sky of your shadow".

Ramses:
"Yes, it is the sun on the East bank.
It appears through the hills covered with golden wheat;
And the first monkey cries from the top of my temple
And the sailor cries from the top of the sail:
A boat appears on the horizon
With shining white lances:
it has vanquished the black pirates;
sleep flies away from the eyelids
and birds fly away from their nests;
but everything is now asleep."

Nefertari:
"Yes, everything around us sleeps,
except the Nile which flows on:
the rings in its waves
resound like silver
as it washes the ground
next to our feet."

Ramses:
"Yes; it is the same long morning
unchangeable as the mountain;
And you and I are now part of the mountain.
And all the things around us disappear."

Nefertari:
"Only the Nile flows on
even when it dies;
Osiris rent in fragments
and from every fragment sprouts a blade of grass.
From the countries of the North
where the sun deposits its gold on bare heads,
From the countries of the South
where the vine and the olive tree grow ripe,
People come.
They come to make their offerings;
Fervour and admiration
shine in their eyes.
And it is a long unchanging morning
as old as thousands of years."

This was their conversation. Who can be sure that they remained silent throughout the centuries? Who can be sure that their eyes of stone see less than our eyes of glass? I feel that they know all there is to know about the things around them. But do they understand exactly what is going on around them today? They see the boats bringing admirers from the North and South. Admiration is a feeling they know well. They were admired when they were flesh and bone and now this admiration is given to their statues and their temple. They know and understand this. But today, at Abu Simbel a strange feeling assails them, as if something unusual is about to happen. They read it in the eyes—blue, green, brown and black—that rest on them. They wonder at the reason for such a host of visitors. Why all these workmen, these boats, this machinery, all this equipment and these massive quantities of cement and concrete? They also wonder what misfortune has befallen these forsaken villages on both banks of the Nile, which have remained as silent as embalmed falcons.

Many events have taken place in more than three thousand years: some powers have been supplanted by others, and disappeared; cults and religions have changed. Only one thing has remained unchanged: their firm conviction that they had been placed for eternity on this spot which touches the waters of the Nile: "You and I are now part of the mountain and all the things around us disappear." The foreboding of some serious happening was now clearly reflected on the face of Ramses. I looked at each of his faces and on every one of them I read the same concern. Should I tell him the truth? When the visitors had disappeared after the guide who was telling them the story of the Pharaoh, I stood alone in front of Ramses; I decided to speak out, to tell him the truth:
"Yes," I said, "something is about to happen; something you will find hard to believe, something which even I find astounding !"

The black pirates, the thieves of light, the baboons, the sons of the sun, fell asleep on the frieze of the temple awaiting the light of day; Ramses could not shut his eyes. He who had slept over the glories of yore began ▶

TEWFIK EL-HAKIM, *of Egypt, is one of the great contemporary writers of the Arab world. he drew on his experience as a magistrate for his book* The Magistrate's Diary; *other well-known works include* The Confused Sultan, Scheherezade, Pygmalion, The Cave-Dweller *and* Fate of a Cockroach. *He was formerly Egypt's Permanent Delegate to Unesco.*

to be awakened from his dreams of the past by sounds from the North; the sound of the pick-axe breaking the rocks reverberated in his head. And he whispered in his wife's ear: "Can you hear that?" Nefertari too was awake, and as anxious as her husband. Ramses continued speaking: "Where are we going? Can it be possible that we are being moved after so many long centuries?"

In times gone by everything stayed in its place. Man had genius, but nature was all-powerful. The mountain was the mountain. Man built temples and altars. He sometimes copied the mountain: he built the Pyramids. And there his power ended. But today he is no longer satisfied with imitation. He is able to transform nature itself according to his wishes. The temple was situated at the foot of the mountain. But the High Dam raised the level of the waters of the Nile and the temple is being moved to the top of the mountain.

And the miracle came to pass. Ramses and Nefertari could not really understand it. But every now and again they were assailed by doubt: Ramses looked at the Nile and said: "It is strange, but I never realized that the river was so low and our temple so high!"

And Nefertari replied:
"What can you mean, my beloved husband? The Nile is always the Nile".

"That may be so", replied Ramses, "but the distance between the temple and the river is no longer the same."

Nefertari laughingly replied: "Are you suggesting that the temple has flown to the top of the mountain like a bird?"

And Ramses went on: "This temple is no longer where it used to be... But I do not understand how that could have happened".

And Nefertari answered: "Why do you say that? Just look around you and you will see that nothing has changed."

And Ramses looked around him. In the distance he saw a half-clad peasant turning a *Shaduf* to water his field; and he saw another peasant working a plough drawn by two cows. He could see the *Sakieh*. He saw the same donkeys bearing the same palm-leaf sacks. Everything was the same.... only his temple had changed. And he could not understand how it had come about.

Ramses thought that the God Ptah, depicted on the wall of his temple, could

At the far end of the inner sanctuary in the Great Temple of Abu Simbel are four statues representing (from left to right) the god Ptah of Memphis, the god Amon of Thebes, Ramses II and the god Re-Horakhty of Heliopolis (see also photos on pages 56 and 57). The statues and the bench on which they are seated were hewn out of the living rock of the mountain. The faces have badly deteriorated, and multicoloured paintwork which once adorned the sculptures has completely faded. The forearms, which have almost entirely disappeared from three of the figures, may have originally consisted of movable segments. A sacred barque, shown in bas-relief on the walls (not visible in photo) may have stood on pedestal in centre of the sanctuary.

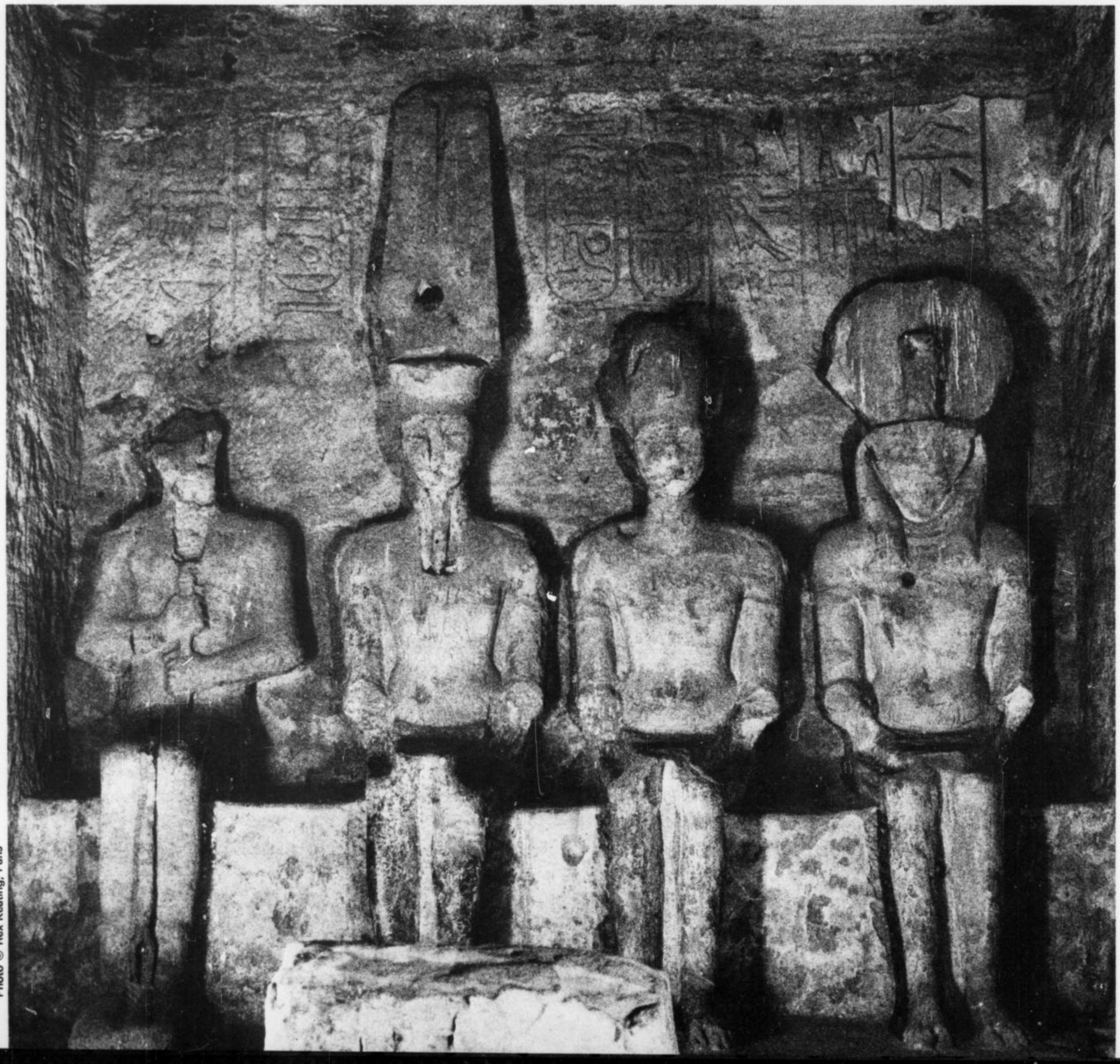

Photo © Rex Keating, Paris

supply him with the answer. But Ptah did not know. He never went outside the temple. He had seen nothing.

Ramses asked him if he had heard any rumours of what was going on, from the visitors who flocked to bring him offerings.

The God Ptah sighed and said:

"All I hear from my visitors are complaints and petitions. They bring me offerings which only benefit the priests". And he added sadly: "I have always wanted people to come and see me for the sake of friendship, just to have a chat and give me news of the outside world. That would have filled my lonely hours and broadened my horizon, and then I could have been able to advise you sometimes".

"Why did you never ask us?"

"I did once, but my visitor did not understand."

"Perhaps he was afraid lest he wearied you with useless chatter?"

A smile spread over the face of the God Ptah, and he said:

"Useless chatter! That is all I ask for. You can keep your offerings and your honours, and give me a little bit of useless chatter!"

"Do you think that that is easy? The priests only allow people into the temple if they have petitions to make and offerings to give".

"I do not want their offerings".

"You do not, but the priests do!"

And so my visit to Abu Simbel came to an end. I took the boat back and thought of Ramses, Nefertari and the God Ptah as I contemplated the beautiful landscape of Nubia. For the Pharaoh and his wife I wished for peace in their environment. I wished that the God Ptah would find a friend, and I prayed to Heaven to give me the chance to go back to Abu Simbel.

■ **Tewfik El Hakim**

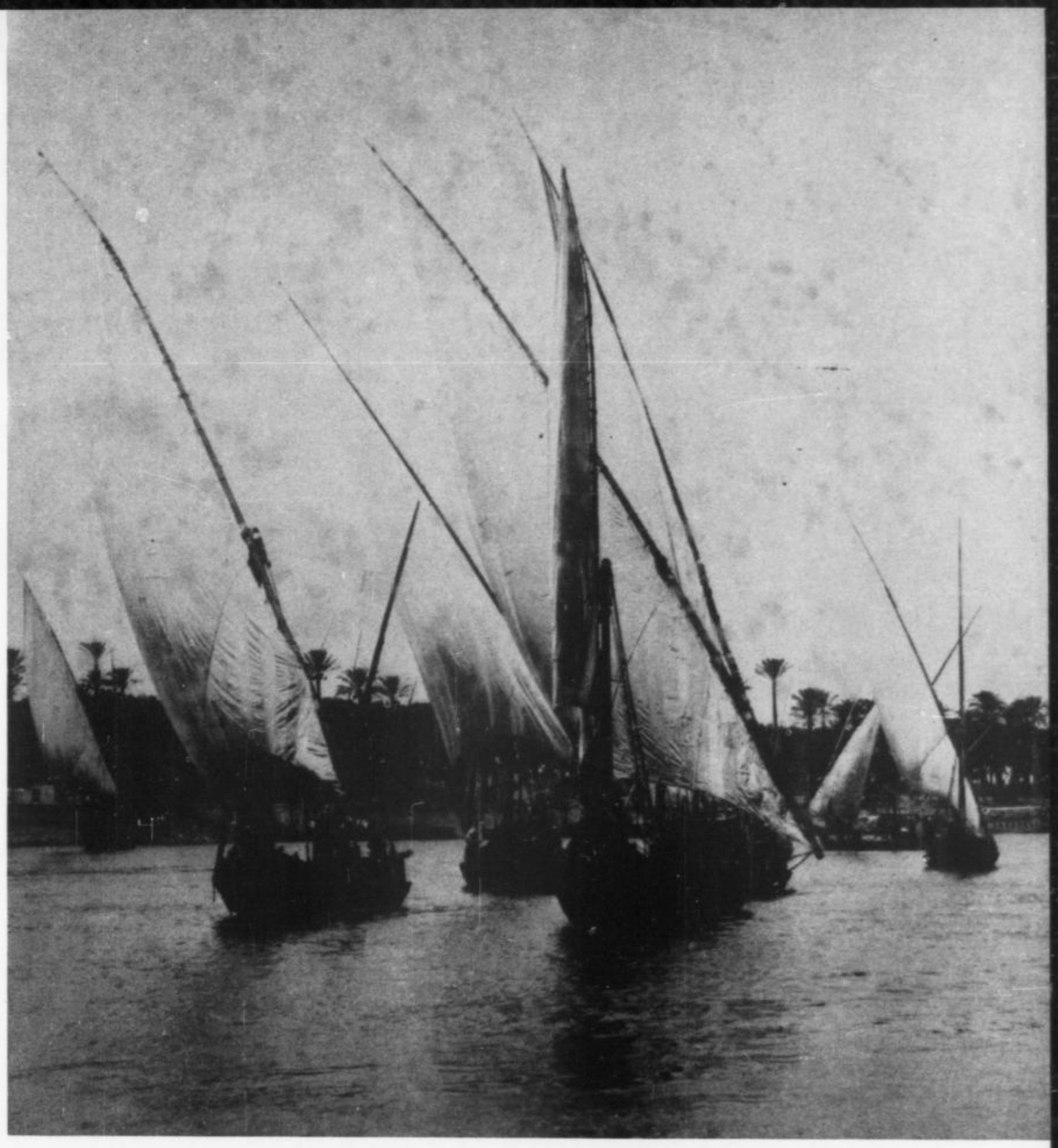

Photo of feluccas on the Nile (above) was taken around 1890 by G. Lekejian of Cairo. Below, the kiosk of Trajan at Philae before the construction of the first Aswan Dam, photographed by J.-P. Sebah around 1870. These rare documents belong to the recently rediscovered historic photographic collections of the Harvard Semitic Museum.

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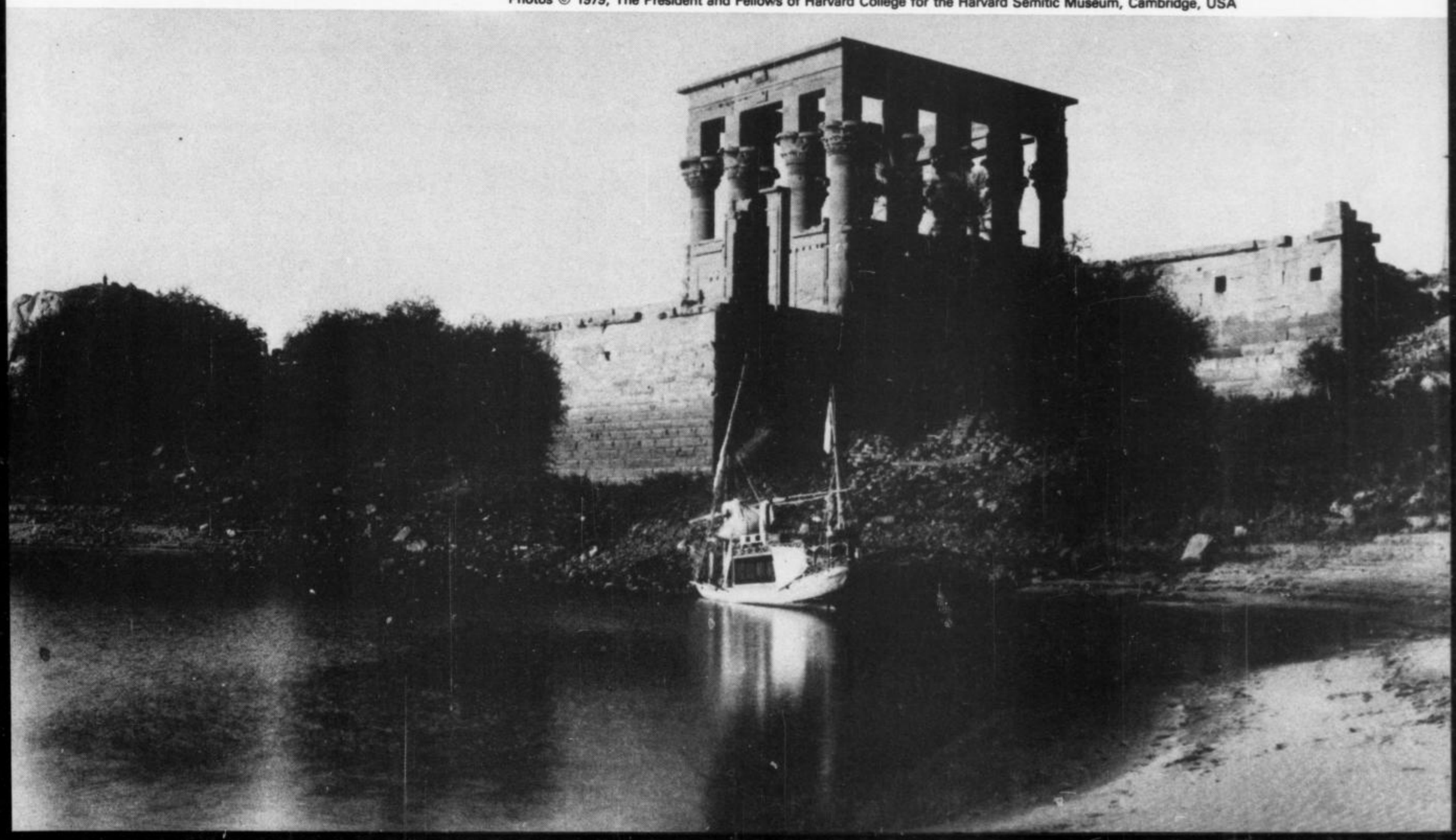

The flooded fortresses of Nubia

by Jean Vercoutter

IN 1895, the English archaeologist J.E. Quibell, while excavating behind the Ramesseum (the funerary temple of Ramses II) at Thebes, discovered the tomb of a doctor or a magician-medicine man. Although the tomb had been looted, Quibell recovered a large quantity of papyrus, with hieratic writings dating from the end of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom (approximately 1700 BC).

Amongst these writings were fragments of famous literary works such as the Story of Sinuhe, or the Tale of the Eloquent Peasant, but the discovery was especially noteworthy because of one rather curious text: a kind of index in which the words, arranged in columns, were classified by groups according to their meanings. Apparently, this papyrus had been used by the Egyptian scribes as something like a dictionary or an encyclopaedia.

By modern criteria, this index must be judged as rather haphazard, since after giving a group of plant names, it goes on to a series of names of birds, and then mammals, which is in turn followed by a list of names of different kinds of bread and cakes, cereals, and parts of the body. However, the text then abruptly switches to a list of geographical names, which are very well classified, as they begin in the south and run north, like the Nile.

One of the results of the excavations undertaken after Unesco's appeal of 8 March 1960 to save the treasures of Nubia, was to identify positively, on site, and with only one exception, the first fourteen geographical names listed on the papyrus, which is now well known to Egyptologists as the "Ramesseum Onomasticon".

These names designate the fourteen fortresses or fortified towns which defended entry to Egypt in the south. They are: Semna South, Semna West, Semna East (or Kumma), Uronarti, Shelfak, Askut, Mirgissa, Buhen, perhaps Serra West or Faras (the only doubtful case) and Serra East, all of which are in Sudanese Nubia (see map page 30), followed by Aniba, Kubban, Bigeh, and Elephantine, which are in Egypt.

More than half of these fortresses are in the most desolate but also the most beautiful region of Sudanese Nubia. This area, known as the "Batn-El-Haggar" or "Belly of Stone" is unfortunately now covered by the backwaters of the Aswan

Photo Jean Vercoutter © French Archaeological Mission to the Sudan.

Photo Paul Almasy, Unesco, Paris.

The gigantic fortress of Buhen once protected the strategic area of the Second Cataract between Upper and Lower Nubia. Excavations of the Egyptian strongholds on the Nile, with their double rows of ramparts, moats, jutting bastions and massive outer walls (up to eight metres thick at the base) have revealed the sophistication of Pharaonic military architecture. Archaeologists reckon that over ten million sun-dried bricks were used to build Buhen.

Aerial view, left, taken before the beginning of the International Nubian Campaign, shows the Second Cataract of the Nile. Quadrangular outline on large island marks the remains of the fortress of Dabenarti. On the left bank of the river stood the citadel of Mirgissa, one of the most powerful links in a chain of strongpoints which defended the southern approaches to Egypt. The Nubian Campaign shed new light on the importance of these fortresses, most of which are today submerged beneath the waters behind the High Dam.

High Dam. Before the dam came into service, this stretch of land extended from a point slightly south of Buhen, approximately at the latitude of Wadi Halfa, to the area above the Dal Cataract, fifty kilometres south of Semna. Here, in addition to other rapids, are those of the Second or "Great" Cataract whose noise, according to the Greeks, was so loud that it actually deafened the people who lived on the river banks.

The very fact that the ancient Egyptians found it necessary to construct fortresses in such a desolate region, to which access was so difficult, is a problem in itself. Why did they build such massive strongholds? Why did they construct ramparts more than ten metres high, and fortified doors that could be defended both from the inside and the outside, such as those at Mirgissa and Buhen? Finally, why were *two* fortresses often built, one to the west and the other to the east of the Nile, both at the same level, when a handful of determined men could have blocked entry to the mountainous gorges through which the river rushes in a raging torrent?

Anyone who knows the wild landscape of the Batn-El-Haggar at first hand or has walked through the enormous ruins of the now-submerged fortresses, will realize why these questions should be asked. What power could have threatened Egypt to such a degree that the Pharaohs of the 12th Dynasty (2000-1785 BC) felt compelled to build not just isolated fortresses but veritable fortified complexes in the passages which were the most difficult to penetrate?

The rapids at Semna, already a very difficult natural obstacle, were defended by five fortresses. One was located upstream, at Semna South, and two more, Semna West and Kumma, were built on either side of the barrier of rocks which forces the Nile into a narrow channel which at low water is only a few metres wide. As if these were not sufficient, two more fortresses were built in this veritable "fortified zone", downstream from the first line of defence: one at Uronarti, right in the middle of the narrow mountain gorge where the Nile emerges from the Semna rapids, and the other at the end of the same gorge, at Shelfak.

At the other end of Batn-El-Haggar was the defence complex of Mirgissa-Buhen, with its advance post at Askut, a central nucleus at Mirgissa and an annex at ▶

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Dabenarti, where the rapids of the Great Cataract virtually prohibit the passage of shipping, as Mohammed Ali's troops learned to their cost in 1820 and Lord Wolseley's in 1884-1885. Finally, at the northern end of the complex, there was the fortified area of Kor (Buhen South) and Buhen itself, along with the two fortresses of Serra East (Khesef-Medjayan in Egyptian) and Serra West or Faras (Ink-taouy), which faced each other across the river.

Obviously there must have been some great danger for the Pharaohs to build ten fortresses and two fortified camps in the Batn-El-Haggar area alone, to protect Egypt from an aggressor coming from the south. Egyptian texts reveal the identity of this aggressor: it was the land of Kush, whose name appears on Egyptian monuments at the very moment when the fortresses were gradually being built along the river.

The potential danger that the land of Kush represented for Egypt is clearly demonstrated in a text written approximately two centuries after the construction of the great Pharaonic fortresses of Nubia. This document is a dispatch which Apophis, the Hyksos ruler of the northern, richer half of Egypt sent to the ruler of Kush sometime around 1580 BC.

This dispatch, it was learned from a stela discovered in the temple of Karnak in 1954, was intercepted by the Theban king Kamosis, who explains: "I seized his message south of the oasis, on the road to Kush. It was a letter actually written in the hand of the prince of Avaris [the stronghold of the Hyksos kings in the Egyptian Delta]: 'I, Aouserre-Apophis, greet my son, the prince of Kush... Are you aware of what Egypt is inflicting upon me? Its prince Kamosis is attacking me on my own territory... He has chosen to besiege two countries so that he may oppress them: mine and yours, and he is laying waste to them. Come to the north, do not be afraid. He is now fighting against my forces here. No one expects to see you come into this part of Egypt. I will hold him at bay until you arrive. Then the two of us will divide up the Egyptian cities and your country will rejoice' ".

In the Karnak text, Kamosis makes no further reference to Kush and so we do not know whether its ruler actually joined forces with the Asiatic Hyksos. It may be doubted that he did so. But this dispatch points clearly to the danger that threatened Egypt. At any moment the country faced the risk of having to fight simultaneously on two fronts: in the Delta or the Syro-Palestinian corridor against Asiatics attracted by the wealth of Egypt, and in Nubia when Nubia was united and hostile.

This permanent danger explains why, on the one hand, the Egyptian rulers of the Middle Kingdom who already had to face Asiatic incursions in the north, attempted to consolidate their southern frontier by building the fortified defence system I have described, and on the other hand, why the Pharaohs of the 18th and 19th Dynasties would not rest, from 1580 until 1300 BC, until they had occupied the entire territory of Kush.

Nevertheless,. the fortresses of Batn-El-Haggar were not constructed for strategic reasons alone. They were also intended to protect and control the river route which led from Egypt to the resources of Africa, for the land of Kush, inhabited by the Nehesyu, supplied Egypt over a long period with many commodities including cattle, wood (especially ebony), incense, ivory, semi-precious stones, and "tropical" products such as giraffes' tails, ostrich feathers and eggs, and the leopard skins worn by Egyptian priests when officiating at funerals. Live giraffes, cheetahs and monkeys were also imported. During the Middle Kingdom gold was added to this list of goods. However, as early as the third millennium BC, it was as a source of manpower and primarily military manpower that Egypt looked to the south. The "scouts" of Kamosis's army which fought against the Hyksos in the Delta were Nubians.

Thus the Nubian fortresses performed a military role by protecting Egypt from a massive invasion by the redoubtable warriors who throughout the ages lived in what is today the Sudan, and by providing jumping-off points for expeditions launched in the south, along the Nile or the desert routes. The army of Sesostris III set out from Semna (1880-1850 BC) and crossed the rapids of the Dal Cataract, thus preparing the way for the annexations by the Pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty of the entire region between Batn-El-Haggar and the Third Cataract.

Certain rather curious documents discovered with the "Ramesseum Onomasticon" reveal another aspect of the fortresses' military activities, that of watching over the desert routes. These documents, known to Egyptologists as the Semna Dispatches, were copies of letters intended for the archives which the commanders of the fortresses exchanged amongst themselves and sent to the central authorities. According to these texts, patrols of Egyptians and Medja, Nubian mercenaries enlisted in the Egyptian army, were regularly sent into the desert. There they often detained groups of nomads which were brought back to the fortresses for interrogation. The nomads were then sent back to their own regions, after "being given bread and beer", as the Dispatches put it. In this way the Pharaohs were always kept informed about what was happening in the south and could be forewarned and forearmed in the case of a raid on Egypt by the Nehesyu.

The second role of the fortresses was to maintain and promote freedom of movement on the Egyptian routes leading south. This is why the Mirgissa slipway (see photo this page) was constructed to enable the boats which plied between Egypt and Nubia to be dragged around the Great Cataract. The "dam" built at Semna by Amenemhet III (1850-1800 BC) fulfilled the same role since, by raising the water level of the Nile when it was at its lowest point, it improved the flow of traffic along the river and made it easier to cross Batn-El-Haggar.

A hieroglyphic text discovered at Semna itself sums up the dual purposes of the fortresses. It is engraved on a granite stela which Sesostris III set up in Semna West and reads as follows: "Southern boundary [of Egypt] made in the year 8, under the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Sesostris III, in order to prevent any Nehesyu from crossing it, by travelling to the north, by land or ship, or with any Nehesyu herds; with the exception of Nehesyu who shall cross it for purposes of trade in Iken or any authorized, profitable business with them, but without allowing a ship of the Nehesyu to pass beyond Heh, northwards, forever".

This text has been interpreted as evidence of the first colour bar in history. However, this is incorrect since the Nehesyu were pro-

Photo André Vila © French Archaeological Mission to the Sudan

Left, the remains of a two-metre-wide slipway used for dragging boats around the rapids of the Second Cataract of the Nile, impassable during the low water season. Discovered beneath several centimetres of sand, it originally consisted of a layer of slippery Nile mud reinforced with wooden crosspieces, which perished long ago.

hibited from entering Egypt not because they were "blacks" but because they belonged to a nation which, in terms of power, presented a danger to the inhabitants of the lower valley of the Nile. Nonetheless, the text clearly emphasizes both the military role of the Nubian fortresses in preventing an invasion from the south, and their economic role in facilitating and promoting trade with the same area. We now know that the Iken referred to in the Semna stela is Mirgissa, and that Heh is probably the rock of Abousir which marks the end of Batn-El-Haggar when travelling from the south.

Thanks to the campaigns for the safeguarding of Nubia, we now know more about the role played by the Nubian fortresses in Egyptian history. The excavations at Buhen, Mirgissa, Askut and Semna South have shown how the construction of the forts was perfectly adapted to the terrain and have demonstrated the extraordinary complexity of their architecture, with their double ramparts, high and low, their loopholes arranged so as to permit all possible angles of fire, and their amazingly strong outer walls, in some places eight metres thick at their base.

These excavations have also furthered our knowledge of garrison life. The military posts were isolated in a hostile region and the physical protection afforded by the strongholds was not felt to be sufficient. Therefore a kind of supernatural protection was provided by magical texts engraved on vessels and statuettes, which were "killed" and buried in areas which the enemy was sure to cross, thus acting as veritable magic "mines". Such texts have been discovered both at Mirgissa and Uronarti. All the fortresses were undoubtedly protected by similar texts.

As the troops were stationed throughout the year in these fortresses, they had gardens and presumably orchards to provide them with vegetables and fresh fruit, which supplemented the regular rations sent from Egypt in packages whose official seals have been found by the thousands. Excavations north of the fortress at Mirgissa have unearthed the homes of "civilians" who may have organized trade with the south. We have discovered the hearths where they baked their bread, the large jars in which they brewed their beer and the bowls from which they drank.

The temples rebuilt in stone during the reoccupation of the fortresses under the New Kingdom (1580-1200 BC) at Semna West, Kumma and Buhen, show that religion was still powerful and that alongside the troops, some of which, according to the Semna Dispatches were recruited locally, lived priests, scribes, artists and artisans. They exchanged letters, copies of which have been found near the Ramesseum at Thebes, and also moulded and painted the remarkable funeral masks found at the necropolis of Mirgissa.

Exploration of the Nubian fortresses has thus yielded outstanding results. Nevertheless, we should not forget the destruction of the edifices themselves, submerged beneath the waters of the new lake. Of course, it has been possible to dismantle the stone temples and transport them to Khartoum, but the lofty constructions which commanded the noble and savage beauty of Batn-El-Haggar have disappeared forever.

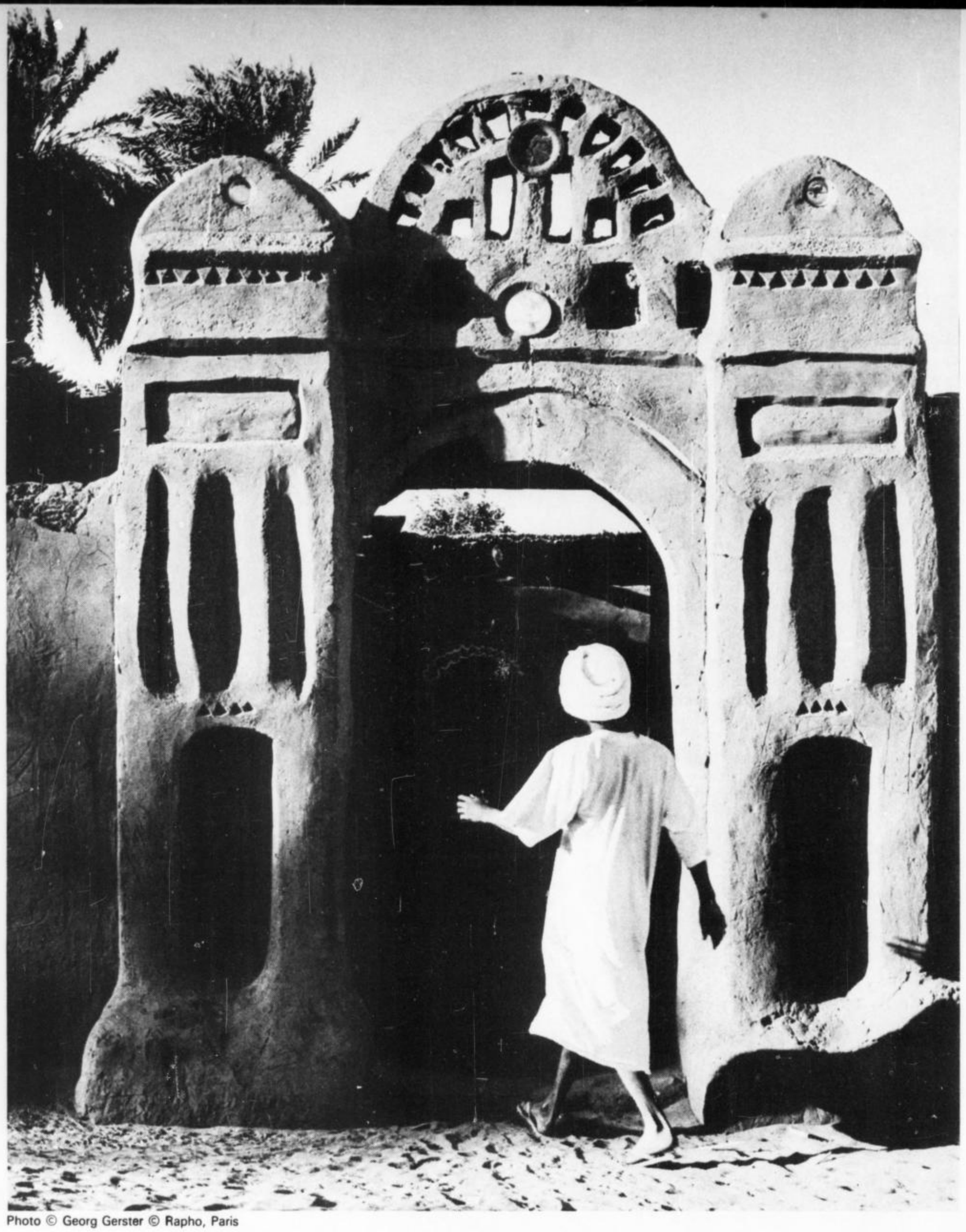
■ **Jean Vercoutter**

Six hundred metres from the mighty fortress of Mirgissa which kept watch over the rapids of the Second Cataract, archaeologists discovered in a pit a cache of magic "execration" texts and figurines. In order to "kill" their enemies, the defenders of Mirgissa scratched the texts on to ceramic vessels which were ritually smashed and buried. Many figurines covered with texts (right) were also found in the pit.

Photos André Vila © French Archaeological Mission to the Sudan

Photo © Jean Leclant, Paris

The pillars of the temple built by Amenophis III (1402-1364) at Soleb in Sudanese Nubia are carved with about a hundred enigmatic human portraits and inscriptions whose significance has long been debated by specialists. Each portrait shows the bust of a man whose hands are tied behind his back; beneath it is a kind of cartouche or frame bearing the name of the man, his people or a region of Africa or Asia from whence he came. This portrait shows an African, identifiable by his beardless face, his earring and his headdress. His accompanying name is *Tirtir*. It was once thought that the figure depicted the Pharaoh's prisoners, but according to another theory these images of submission had a magical significance, representing peoples over which some kind of spell had been cast.



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Left, gateway leading to the inner courtyard of a house on the island of Argo in Upper Nubia (Sudan). According to custom, the decoration is an integral part of the architecture, except for the three plates set into the upper part of the structure and, a curious detail, the headlamp in the centre of the arch. Facing page, a Nubian works the *shaduf*, an ancient irrigation device used for watering the small riverside plots of cultivated land.

The blessed land

by Robert A. Fernea

WHENEVER Nubians gather together, they speak of the past, of Old Nubia, the "blessed land", which stretched from Aswan south across the Egyptian border into Dongola in the Sudan, and which now lies under water. In Kom Ombo, Egypt, where the majority of Egyptian Nubians were resettled, the people wonder whether it will ever be possible to return to this "blessed land" and settle on the shores of the new lake. What was this "blessed land" which is discussed with such nostalgia ? And who are the people who lived there ?

During the Nubian ethnographic survey, which took place from 1961 to 1964, American and Egyptian social scientists made an effort to describe the society and culture of Old Nubia before it disappeared forever.

What we discovered was that culturally there was no single Nubian people. Moreover, the people in Nubia had met a diversity of environmental circumstances with a wide range of adaptive social responses. The emergence of "Nubian" as a social identity in Egypt, now shared by all peoples from south of Aswan, has been the product of the traumatic experience these diverse people share : the flooding of their villages and the loss of their homeland.

The first Aswan Dam, built in 1902 and heightened in 1913 and 1933, flooded all the communities of Egyptian Nubia, stretching along the Nile on either side of the valley. The communities in the north were totally

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flooded, and the houses were moved to high rocky ground. Those in the south lost only a portion of their agricultural land. This was the reason why during the time of our study, some northern villages had no resident adult males, while in the southern districts and in the Sudan, more than fifty per cent of the male population was present. Thus the rates of migration from Nubia to the cities were high throughout the region, but varied greatly, depending on the quantity of arable land available in particular areas.

Language was not a uniting factor in the old days. From north to south in Egyptian Nubia, the people spoke three mutually unintelligible languages: Kenuzi, Arabic, and Mahasi. However, Kenuzi, the northern language, was close enough to the Dongolawi language spoken in the Sudan that these two groups could communicate. Thus there are really only two living Nubian languages: Kenuzi-Dongolawi and Mahasi. Arabic was the exclusive language of villagers in the central area of Egyptian Nubia, near Wadi el Arab.

After government schools were opened in Nubia in the 1940s, Arabic was taught to all the children in Nubia, and by the time our study was made, the majority of Kenuzi and Mahasi speaking men (and many women) spoke Arabic in addition to their native Nubian language, and this was true of nearly all the children. In addition, individual men spoke English, French, German, and Italian according to their experiences as labour migrants.

Before the flooding and the trauma of resettlement, the great majority of Nubian people were far more likely to travel to Cairo for work than to another Nubian community only a few miles away. Indeed, we met Nubian men who had lived in Europe and the United States but had never set foot in a Nubian district other than their own. Working in Egyptian embassies abroad and in the homes of foreign diplomats, individual Nubians came home with knowledge of various parts of the world, both east and west.

This knowledge—of customs, geography, politics, styles of life—was widely shared through conversations and anecdotes which travelled through the Nile-side villages more easily than the people. Thus Nubian people combined inward and outward perspectives, attitudes both cosmopolitan and provincial; they knew Egypt and Europe from their own experiences and those of friends and relatives, but they were not familiar with all of Nubia.

Historically, the men of Nubia were known in Egypt as domestic servants, but by the time our studies were made the Nubian urban migrants had begun to make inroads into the professions, as well as into factory work and other blue collar jobs; in fact, the profile of their employment in various sectors of the urban economy was similar to that of other Egyptians.

In Old Nubia, agriculture was the basis of subsistence despite an almost total absence of rain. The Nile was used to water the land with both modern and ancient mechanisms. The *shaduf*, a weighted water bucket which swung a few gallons of water at a time up from the river, sufficed to irrigate the small plots of soil which had been dredged up onto sand and rocks after the first Aswan Dam was built. The *shaduf*, common in northern Nubia, was used in Pharaonic times and is at least 3,000 years old! But in districts such as Ballana and Dakka, modern diesel pumps irrigated larger areas of land, basins of clay soils which were admittedly not so fertile as the river banks, but which helped make up for some of the land flooded by the First Aswan Dam.

Further south, distinctive hand-hewn waterwheels were used, particularly in Adendan and the Sudan. These chains of buckets, turned by cattle power and often co-operatively owned, could irrigate an acre or more of land. The waterwheels were introduced in Roman times and permitted a significant increase in the Nubian population by opening up higher areas of fertile land along the river.

Almost all that was grown in Old Nubia was locally consumed or otherwise utilized, down to the last strip of palm fibre. Vegetables and grains were eaten locally, as were most of the dates of the south. Surprisingly, the one agricultural cash crop of the region which was exported was animals. Though the desert which tightly bordered the narrow valley offered little grazing or fodder, the fallow lands and fields were,

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2 Photo Chuzeville ©
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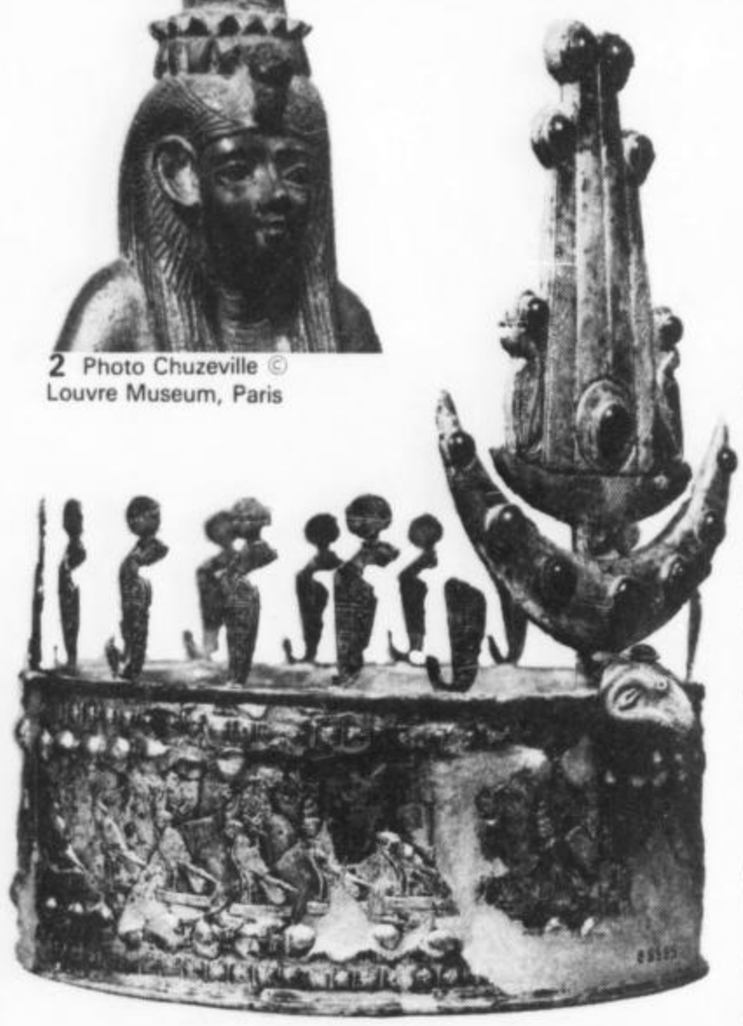

3 Photo © Documentation Centre for Ancient Egypt, Cairo

4 Photo © P.A. Interpress. National Museum, Warsaw

after harvest, important sources of fodder for the sheep, goats and cattle.

Furthermore, fodder could be quickly grown in the summer when the dam was open, on land covered by water the rest of the year. The exportable animals were carried to market in Aswan or Wadi Halfa on the Sudanese post boats and the lateen-sailed feluccas.

Despite the often ingenious uses of the bits and pieces of land available, Old Nubia remained a minimal subsistence area throughout its recent history. Food was sometimes in short supply in parts of Nubia and many residents depended on remittances from sons and husbands working in the cities. On the other hand, the housing was far more spacious than most families would have been able to afford in Cairo or in other Egyptian villages. The rectangular walls of the southern homes, for example, often contained two courtyards, guest rooms, a summer kitchen and a winter kitchen in addition to family rooms. Enclosures for animals were built outside, near to the houses.

However, such homes were rarely occupied at the same time by all the people with ownership rights to the property. Most residents of the houses we visited could list several men, often married and with families, who had a room or a storage space in their Nubian house, but who lived elsewhere. Thus Old Nubia was a land of large partially empty homes, ready to provide living space for visiting kinsmen at times of marriage, childbirth, sickness, unemployment, or festivals. Twice as many people were considered residents of Egyptian Nubia as the 50,000 who actually lived there. Nubia was a refuge and a shelter for its absent natives, all of whom were considered part owners of the "blessed land".

The architecture of the houses in Old Nubia was admired by visitors and was a source of pride for the residents. Rebuilt since the last heightening of the Old Aswan Dam in 1933, these homes combined elements from both Pharaonic and Islamic styles in a manner which was distinctively Nubian. Whitewashed and brightly decorated, plastered with mud and straw, the homes throughout Nubia were a sign of the twentieth century prosperity and security.

In the northern Kenuz region, the house roofs over the guest or bridal rooms were barrel-vaulted with mud bricks, an older pattern restored to this region after the flooding from the first dam killed the palm trees which once provided roof beams. Here, where only sand and rock were left above high water levels, paint and whitewash restored some of the colour which nature could no longer provide. Only a small fraction of the native villagers could live in these communities; lack of productive means in northern Nubia had forced the majority of men and many of the women and children to live in the cities of Egypt. It was the *moulids*, celebrations of saints' days, which annually reunited many of the migrants with their relatives in the villages.

The *moulids* were offered by different tribally organized villages, each of whom sponsored the ceremonies for certain Muslim saints. Processional visits to the cenotaphs of the holy men, accompanied by prayers and supplications, were the major purposes of the *moulids*. However, dancing and feasting were also part of the occasion, along with visits from travelling merchants. Boatloads of Nubians from neighbouring villages were added to the city migrants. The latter were expected to combine their efforts and financial resources with the resident villagers to host such occasions.

Southern Nubia was quite different. Here in districts such as Abu Simbel, Ballana and Adendan, the effects of the old Aswan Dam were minimal and vegetation was still luxuriant, with fields of millet and other crops green in season along with palm groves further inland, a rich landscape watered by the Nile. As in the Sudanese Nubian villages (which continued uninterrupted along the river to Wadi Halfa and beyond) the traditional pattern of life had not been changed by the Aswan dam and the annually renewed alluvial soils continued to be farmed as they had been for thousands of years. In the southern area, *moulids* were not as common as in the north, but the activities of farming often involved communal labour. Land and palm trees were owned by co-inheritors and linked many members of the communities

Shown here are four examples, taken from different historical periods, of the crescent moon and horn designs which the Nubians have used as decorative motifs since very early times. (1) On the façade of a modern house near Serra; (2) On a bronze statue of Isis; between the horns is a moon-disc; (3) On a 4th-century-AD king's crown of silver and semi-precious stones. The crown was discovered in a tomb at Ballana in Egyptian Nubia. Beneath the crescent is a ram's head, another typical Nubian motif; (4) In a wall-painting of Christ protecting an eparch, discovered in the cathedral of Faras (see also page 2). The eparch was an official who functioned as the metropolitan or bishop of a province. His most important attribute was his helmet-like crown topped by a crescent mounted on a rod.

economically along with the social ties of kinship and marriage.

Marriages in particular were occasions for three days and nights of dancing and feasting in the Mahasi speaking region, bringing together men and women from villages and districts up and down the Nile. The flat-roofed homes of the south did not need such elaborate decoration as in the northern region. Even the dresses of the women were the more sombre *gar-gara-s*, long-trained robes of filmy black material. The rich land covered with productive fields, grazed by many animals, and farmed by men and women, provided the colour and beauty which all of Nubia had once enjoyed. The dignified dancing of the women, the athletic line dancing of the men were joyous celebrations in this setting; even though many men were absent as migrant workers the Mahasi-speaking areas of Egyptian and Sudanese Nubia were still a setting where both ceremonial and subsistence activities provided a busy yearly schedule of activity for all the residents.

As our research progressed, we found that though the villagers of Nubia were clustered along the banks of great rivers, much of their economic condition and life styles resembled that of the oases societies in the Sahara to the west. For example, migration has long been a way of life for many of these oases, in Libya, Algeria and Morocco. As in Nubia, distance and territorial isolation both protect the local communities from too much outside interference and force some of the inhabitants to leave when the absolute limits of the local resource base are reached.

We found that for the people of Nubia, the more obligatory it was to leave Nubia, the more blessed Nubia became: a land of security for families, a place of marriage, the true home among one's own people.

Yet the advantages of the city were also well understood. Better medical care, better schools for the children, and above all better job opportunities were primary considerations. As in other parts of the world, some preferred country life and others preferred life in the cities. Nubians who became doctors and judges, who became part of the middle class in the cities, were less likely to return to their villages of origin.

Nubia was also the home of several minorities, each of whom responded to the limited economic opportunities in their own way. The *Halabi,* for instance, were pedlars, who traded toys and trinkets for handfuls of dates from children and women during the harvest season. Arabs, such as the *Ababda,* were also visitors to the villages, occasionally marrying Nubian women and settling down in the communities. Sayiidi farmers from Upper Egypt worked the land exposed in the north for two months each summer while the dam was opened, sharecropping for the Kenuzi women looking after the family property. The crops of melon they produced were found in the Aswan market. Other Sayiidi fished up and down the Nile or worked in pump irrigated projects.

In terms of integrating outsiders into the Nubian communities or transforming Nubian migrants into urban Egyptians, marriage has been of key importance. The cultural and social integrity of Nubia, as witnessed by the preservation of the Nubian languages, has been maintained. This has been true because of the relative isolation of the region and because Nubians could draw upon the economic opportunities of the cities for support.

Nubian history reveals an enduring pattern of biocultural adaptation; infusions of foreign peoples into Nubia have been slow and steady rather than radical and overwhelming. When social change is mediated by kinship and marriage the languages and traditions, the skills and abilities of the communities are not lost. Neither migration from Nubia nor into Nubia ever seems to have totally disrupted the continuity of local life—till the last decade.

The relocated Egyptian Nubians in New Nubia are now part of the Aswan-Kom Ombo population and must accept the full impact of Egyptian life on their new communities. Arabic is the language of business and politics, the source of personal advancement in the competitive milieu of modern Egyptian life; everyone is learning it. But if Old Nubia is now only a memory, it is nonetheless of great importance, for it unites the Nubians of Egypt in their new roles as an ethnic group.

The "blessed land" is thus still of great importance—just as it was to migrants in past times who were often unable to return for year after year. The effort to convince the Egyptian Government to explore the possibilities of settlement along the shores of the new lake now unites many Egyptian Nubians in a common cause. Already some preliminary studies are underway and perhaps one day new villages may be built near the old ones which have now melted away.

■ Robert A. Fernea

The circle painted on the wall meant that this house was doomed to disappear beneath the waters of the Aswan High Dam. The inhabitants had to abandon their homeland for a new life far from the "blessed land" of Nubia.

Photo Gunvor Jorgsholm Pressehuset, Copenhagen

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

princes. Thus it seems natural to assume that tombs which are mainly Egyptian but deviate in some details from the orthodox model should also be regarded as belonging to Nubians.

A third tomb is quite as instructive. The tomb in Thebes (modern Luxor) of the Viceroy Huy, who governed Nubia for the famous king Tutankhamun, contains a series of paintings showing how he levied the taxes in Lower Nubia. Among the taxpayers is a dark-skinned man, dressed as an Egyptian but with some exotic additions to his dress; he has, moreover, a typical non-Egyptian face. The text calls him Heka-nefer, "the Great One of Miam", which is the name of the administrative centre of Lower Nubia (Aniba in modern times).

One of the sensations of the Nubian Campaign was that Professor Simpson from Boston found the tomb of this Nubian prince, a figure well known since the early days of Egyptology, thereby definitely proving that Heka-nefer was a historical person and not simply a conventional figure in Egyptian iconography (see page 44).

Now, thanks to the titles of these Nubian princes we know that they were all educated at the Eygptian court together with the Egyptian princes, that they then pursued the usual career of an Egyptian official and were finally sent to rule their countrymen in their home district of Nubia.

In Nubia there was also an Egyptian Viceroy with a staff of Egyptian officials, and the tribute lists show that slaves and raw materials, such as gold, minerals, cattle, African wood, and exotic African goods, were exported from Nubia to Egypt. Egyptian goods, not mentioned in the official texts, but occurring in the tombs of Lower Nubia, demonstrate that there was at least to some extent a return traffic from Egypt.

Lower Nubia seems to have been a flourishing colony, to the benefit both of the rulers and of their subjects. But this situation gradually changed during the New Kingdom, to judge from the decreasing number of tombs and cemeteries which can be dated to the later half of this period. In fact, in the thirteenth century, when Ramses II built his famous temples in Lower Nubia—Abu Simbel, Wadi es Sebua, and Derr—the population of Nubia was rapidly becoming smaller.

Very few tombs can be dated to his reign and practically no traces of settlements, although enough is preserved to show that it was not a period of a total vacuum. The temples needed a certain number of priests and servants to function, so we must not exaggerate the implications of the scarcity of archaeological remains.

On the other hand further south, in Dongola, outside the area of the Nubian Campaign, big cities of Ramesside times have been discovered, which show that the economic centre of the Nubian colony had shifted southwards and that Nubia had become only a country of transit to richer regions further south. Later, owing to the disruption of the Egyptian State, this part of the colony also declined and about 1000 BC there is no longer any trace of Egyptian rule.

■ **Torgny Säve-Söderberg**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 47

son for this act of toleration. Closure of the temples of Philae would have met with strong resistance from the inhabitants of Nubia, especially from the Blemmyes, a warlike people from the eastern desert who had long caused trouble to the Roman authorities by their raids on Upper Egypt. In AD 451-452 Maximinus, the general of the Emperor Marcian, led an expedition against them and defeated them.

A treaty ensued, by which the Blemmyes undertook to keep the peace for a hundred years and, in return, they were allowed to offer sacrifices at Philae and even to borrow the sacred image of Isis periodically for the purpose of obtaining oracles.

Before the expiry of this pact, however, Justinian sent his general, Narses, around AD 536, to put an end to the last outpost of paganism in the empire. The temple of Isis was closed, the priests were disbanded and the statues transported to Constantinople.

Soon afterwards, the hypostyle hall was converted by bishop Theodorus into a church, dedicated in the name of St. Stephen, and a Christian community settled on the island.

During this new phase in Philae's history, which lasted until the 11th - 13th centuries, very considerable damage was done to the monuments. Blocks were extracted from the monuments and re-used, some in the building of a Coptic church and others in the construction of a street.

Fortunately the hieroglyphic inscriptions, both in the temple of Isis and in the other surviving buildings, have generally been spared deliberate mutilation. One text on the north wall of Hadrian's vestibule, in front of a figure of Mandulis, is dated by an accompanying note in Demotic to 24 August, AD 394; it is thus the latest datable example of the hieroglyphic script now known.

The Christian iconoclasts also left undamaged many hundreds of Demotic and Greek graffiti, some written by priests and others by pilgrims who regularly came to Philae, either simply to pay homage to Isis or to seek her intervention in obtaining relief from their ailments.

Here again, Philae has preserved the latest known examples of one of the three scripts in which the Egyptian language was written—in this instance Demotic, a cursive script ultimately derived from hieroglyphics. This graffito, which is dated to 2 December, AD 452 was written by a priest named Esmet on a wall of one of the Osiris chambers of the temple of Isis. It shows that knowledge of the ancient language was not completely lost as long as Philae continued to serve the needs of the worshippers of Isis.

Philae, moreover, preserved one inscription which proved invaluable in the recovery of that knowledge after it had been forgotten for more than a thousand years. It was a Greek inscription on the pedestal of an obelisk which bore a hieroglyphic inscription. The texts were not two versions of the same document, one in Greek and the other in Egyptian, but both mentioned Cleopatra III, a wife of Ptolemy VII, Euergetes II, and it was the recognition of her name in the hieroglyphic inscription of the obelisk, when combined with the previously uncorroborated identification of the name of Ptolemy on the Rosetta Stone, which provided the starting point in the decipherment of the hieroglyphic script.

■ **Iorwerth E.S. Edwards**

Further reading on the Nubian Campaign and Nubian History

• **Nubia, Corridor to Africa,** by William Y. Adams. Allen Lane, London, 1977. 797 pp. (£19.50)

• **Nubian Rescue,** by Rex Keating. Robert Hale and Co., London, and Hawthorn Books, Inc., New York, 1975. 269 pp. (£3.80)

• **Africa in Antiquity. The Arts of Ancient Nubia and the Sudan.** The catalogue of an exhibition with the same title, organized by the Brooklyn Museum. 1978. Published in two volumes by the Division of Publishing and Marketing Services, The Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York 11238.

• **The Salvage of the Abu Simbel Temples,** Concluding Report, December 1971. Vattenbyggnadsbyran (VBB) Consulting Engineers and Architects, Stockholm, Sweden. 1976.

• **Nubian Twilight,** by Rex Keating. Rupert Hart-Davis, London, 1962. 111 pp.

• **Kalabsha: The Preserving of the Temple,** by G.R.H. Wright. Gebr. Mann Verlag GmbH., Berlin, 1972.

• **Campagne Internationale de l'Unesco pour la Sauvegarde des Sites et Monuments de Nubie: Bibliographie.** A bibliography prepared by Louis Christophe (in French only). Unesco, 1977. 123 pp.

• **Nubian Treasure,** An Account of the Discoveries at Ballana and Qustul, by Walter B. Emery. Methuen Ltd., London, 1948. 72 pp. with 48 plates and 10 maps and plans.

• **The Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia,** by Torgny Säve-Söderbergh. A lecture prepared for the Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters; distributed by Munksgaards Boghandel, Copenhagen. The Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia has published nine volumes of results under the General Editorship of Torgny Säve-Söderbergh: 1. **The Rock Drawings;** 2. **Preceramic Sites;** 3. **Neolithic and A-Group Sites;** 4. **C-Group, Pangrave and Kerma Sites;** 5. **Pharaonic New Kingdom Sites;** 6. **Late Nubian Cemeteries;** 7. **Late Nubian Sites, Churches and Settlements;** 8. **Textiles;** 9. **Human Remains.** Africana Publishing Corporation, 101 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10003.

Unesco has produced or co-produced a number of 16 mm. films on aspects of the Nubian campaign. They include **Report on Philae, The World Saves Abu Simbel** and **Philae in the Saving.** A Unesco television programme on the campaign, **Victory in Nubia** (16 mm. 52 mins., colour) will shortly be available.

For information about the distribution of these films please apply to the Press and Audio-Visual Information Division, Unesco, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris.

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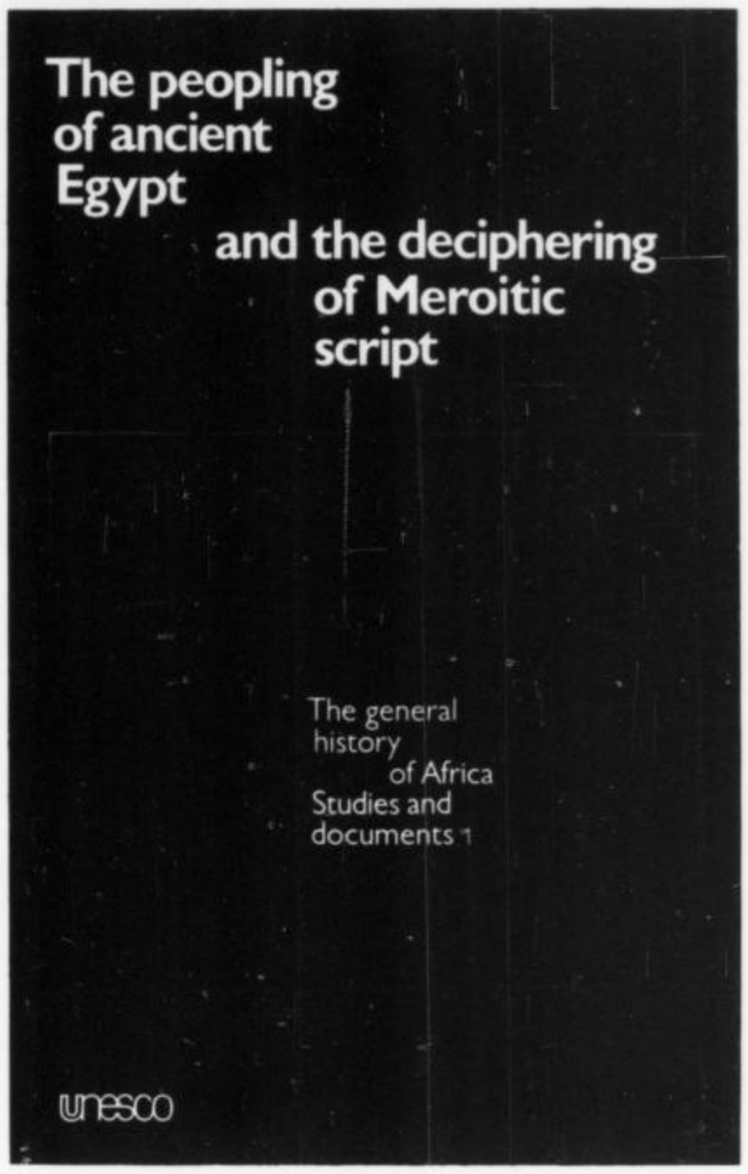

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A temple that made tracks across the desert

The International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia from flooding by the waters of the Aswan High Dam at Sadd El Aali is now coming to an end, just twenty years after it was launched by Unesco. The campaign has been the biggest archaeological rescue operation the world has ever seen and an unprecedented victory for international cultural co-operation. This aerial photo shows a section of the temple of Amada after it had been hoisted in one piece onto a three-track railway and slowly edged 2,600 metres across the desert to a site beyond reach of the mounting waters. Tracks stretching into the distance are the remains of the railbed. Heaps of rocks nearby are the stones of another temple awaiting reconstruction. Altogether more than a score of ancient shrines and temples were removed and rebuilt elsewhere during the Nubian campaign. (See page 6).

Photo J. Marthelot © Universal Photo, Paris